

DISNEY'S CRUEL WORLD

June 26-July 9, 1995

In THESE TIMES

the alternative newsmagazine

BLEAK HOUSE

- HUD takes over Chicago's "second ghetto"
- California's public aid for private profiteers
- Reforming America's mansion subsidy

\$2.50/CANADA \$3.00



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITORIAL

TRY TO HEAR THE MESSAGE

Okay, Sen. Bob Dole (R-KS) is a hypocrite. Suddenly, when he needs the support of the Christian Right to get the Republican presidential nomination, he becomes outraged about sex and violence in rap music, the movies and on TV. And, yes, he only attacks Democrats and liberals in the entertainment industry while remaining discreetly silent about purveyors of mindless violence like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bruce Willis and other macho Republican heroes. Indeed, Dole singled out *True Lies*, a truly despicable Schwarzenegger showcase of violence, misogyny and ethnic stereotypes, as an exemplar of the good movie—perhaps because it was financed by right-wing media mogul Rupert Murdoch.

Even so, let's face it, he has a point. Morally bankrupt as Dole may be, it's a mistake to concentrate on the messenger while ignoring the message. Yet that's pretty much what his critics have done. Liberal columnists have had a field day casting doubt on the authenticity of Dole's rebirth as a critic of corporate irresponsibility and venality. Several commentators have also argued—as we would—that Dole and William J. Bennett, his partner in pseudo-social responsibility, ignore the underlying causes of crime and sexual violence while railing at its symptoms. And, the critics add,

***Bob Dole and
William Bennett
have raised a
storm by
attacking
Hollywood and
rap artists.
But their critics
concentrate on
motives and
ignore the issue.***

both Dole and Bennett do so in a way that plays to the racial and ethnic prejudices of their target audience.

All of this may be true, but that doesn't validate the overly defensive reaction of Hollywood liberals like Norman Lear, the creator of *All in the Family* and several other first-rate TV series. "Hollywood, in its presentation of violence and sex," Lear said in response to Dole's speech, "has no more to answer for than the Congress of the United States." The name of the game in the entertainment business, he said, "is short-term profit," adding that that is "exactly what Congress is all about."

Given Lear's propensity for tongue-in-cheek satire, this might be read as an implicit confession of Hollywood's moral bankruptcy. In context, however, and especially because other Hollywood liberals responded along similar lines, it is more likely a genuine expression of industry anger at the pot for calling the kettle black. And that's unfortunate, because many Hollywood movies, TV series and rap lyrics do glorify and promote mindless violence, especially against women.

Of course, in the larger scheme of things, neither Hollywood nor Congress is the primary cause of the anti-social attitudes reflected in the products of the entertainment industry. The blame for that can be laid at the door of those in the larger business community whose first—and usually last—concern is corporate profitability. Those are the people who own Congress and the White House, as well as Time Warner and all the other entertainment giants, and who seem indifferent, if not oblivious, to the degradation of our society.

But that's no excuse either for the rap artists who claim they are merely telling it like it is, or for movie makers and their support networks in the news media. The fact is that both the music of violence and the pictures of violence desensitize us to all the worst aspects of our culture, and that they are especially pernicious in their effect on children. There is no redeeming value in singing about killing cops, cutting off women's breasts or celebrating mindless, gory murders and rapes.

As Bennett correctly argues, this is not a question of censorship or First Amendment rights. But it is a question, as Bennett fails to note, of the near-total corruption of society by those who glorify the free market, the mindless pursuit of great wealth and world domination in disregard of the well-being—and even the lives—of "lesser" peoples.

The United States is increasingly becoming a sick society. The misogyny and violence portrayed in song and picture are not the cause of this sickness, but they help spread the disease, which is already epidemic. It would be a terrible mistake to cede the high ground on this issue to the likes of Dole and Bennett.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

Editor: James Weinstein
 Managing Editor: Jim McNeill
 Senior Editors: Patricia Aufderheide,
 David Moberg, Salim Muwakkil
 Culture Editor: Chris Lehmann
 Asst. Managing Editors:
 Dave Mulcahey, David Futrelle
 In Person Editor: Joel Bleifuss
 European Editor: Diana Johnstone
 New York Editor: Daniel Lazare
 Education Editor: Alex Molnar
 Contributing Editors: Bill Boisvert, Miles Harvey
 Peter Karman, Scott McLemee, Ilan Stavans
 Washington Correspondent: John B. Judis
 Eastern Europe Correspondent:
 Paul Hockenros
 Far East Correspondent: Dave Lindorff
 Media Watch Columnist: Jennifer Gonnerman
 Film Critics: Pat Dowell, Patricia Aufderheide
 Copy Editor: George Hodak (on paternity leave)
 Typo: Jim Rinnert
 Editorial Interns: Jake Blankenship,
 Becky Boykin, Anastasia McRae
 ITT Radio Coordinator: Miles Harvey

Art Director: Peter Hannan
 Associate Art Director: Lisa Weinstein
 Asst. Art Director: Kit Boyce
 Cartoonist: Terry LaBan

Publisher: James Weinstein
 Associate Publisher: Beth Schulman
 Assistant Publisher: Claudia Morris

Business Manager: Robert Larson
 Circulation Director: Etelka Lehoczy
 Advertising Director: Charisse M. Williams
 (ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 26 times a year by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 772-0100. Member: Alternative Press Syndicate. The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright © 1995 by the Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Copies of *In These Times* contract with the National Writers Union are available upon request. Complete issues and volumes of *In These Times* are available from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI. Selected articles are available on 4-track cassette from Freedom Ideas International, 640 Beyside, Detroit, MI 48217. All rights reserved. *In These Times* is indexed in both the Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Publisher does not assume liability for unsolicited manuscripts or material. Manuscripts or material unaccompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned. All correspondence should be sent to: *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. E-mail: itt@igc.apc.org. Subscriptions are \$35.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). For customer service and to place subscription orders, call toll free: (800) 827-0270. Advertising rates sent on request. Available back issues are \$5 each; specify volume and number. All letters received by *In These Times* become property of the newspaper. We reserve the right to print letters in condensed form. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 308 Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054.

This issue (Vol. 19, No. 16) published June 26, 1995 for newsstand sales June 26 - July 9, 1995.



InTHESE TIMES

CONTENTS

Volume 19, Number 16

BLEAK HOUSE

The second city's second ghetto

*Lessons from Chicago's
public housing crisis*

DAVID MOBERG

14

California schemin'

*Private developers clean up on HUD
policies in the Golden State*

JEFF ELLIOT

18

Mortgage in America

*How to reform America's
mansion subsidy*

PETER DREIER

22



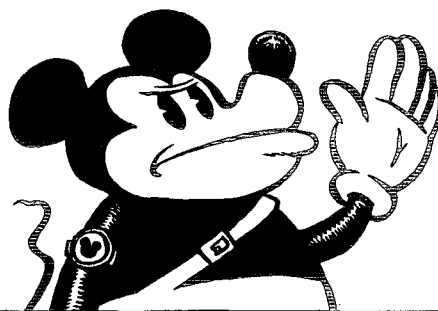
©1995 TERRY LABAN

Mouse amok

Dissecting Disney World

CHRIS RASMUSSEN

35



FEATURES

First Stone: Nonprofits out on a limb • Joel Bleifuss.....12

Black leaders look for common ground • Salim Muwakkil....

REVIEWS

Film: *The Glass Shield* • Pat Dowell.....

In Print: Nice work if you can get it • James Weinstein.....28

The Captain Cook controversy • Joel Robbins.....32

DEPARTMENTS

Letters	4	Tomorrow's news • Steve Brodner.....	9
Sylvia • Nicole Hollander	4	In Person • Wim Roefs.....	10
In Short	6	Etc. • Fred Spielberg.....	10
Appall-O-Meter	6	Huge Mouth • Peter Hannan.....	13
Media Watch • Jennifer Gonnerman.....	8	Classifieds	37

LETTERS

Chocolate trifle

Had I wanted to read the State Department line on "Castro's Cuba" in the form of a review of *Strawberry and Chocolate* (ITT, May 15), I'd have looked to *Newsweek* or the *New Republic*, not *In These Times*.

Let's not help the conservatives in Congress by making Cuba a wedge issue for the left.

Ted Cloak
Albuquerque, N.M.

Cuban homophobia

Half-truths are more effective than lies, and the Ilan Stavans review of the Cuban film *Strawberry and Chocolate* is an excellent example. By using partial facts, he successfully obliterates the message of hope that the film and the filmmaker have tried to convey. That a new generation is emerging in Cuba, capable of being objective about the

blind spots of the revolution while remaining faithful to its humanitarian roots, is too subversive a notion for those who see the only future for the island in a total surrender to capitalism.

Cuba's treatment of gays has been deplorable, but the official policy today is quite different from what it was in the '80s. When Stavans writes of the Cuban government "sending [homosexuals] to concentration camps," he sounds as if it were happening right now, which is not the case. When he talks about the tragic fate of Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas, he forgets to mention that Arenas' predilection for underage youths made his life more difficult in Cuba and eventually got him in trouble in this country as well. The overall tone of Stavans' piece manages to convey the idea that Cuban anti-gay feelings were introduced by the revolution, an idea that is also often touted by the gay exile community. My experience of Havana in the '50s is quite different. Cuba before Castro

was no paradise for lesbians or gays. Yet, as part of the everything-for-sale mentality of Cuba's old tourist economy, Havana offered quite a wide latitude to the gay visitor. And, among the upper classes, where wealth provided the necessary means, homosexual behavior in both genders was tolerated if it was discreet and practiced out of sight. Life was considerably more difficult for the middle- and working-class gay or lesbian, who faced rejection from family and friends, plus the threat of job loss and social ostracism. The revolution, among other excesses, codified and, to a certain extent, sanctioned those attitudes.

That is why the popularity of the Gutiérrez Alea film in Cuba is important. And, whatever the original official reaction, its eventual backing by the government indicates that Cuba is far more receptive to change than most American commentators commonly assume.

Ada Bello
Philadelphia

Fighting back

Brian Siano's snide remarks about the booklet from Free Inquiry entitled *Fighting Back* (ITT, May 15) entirely missed the point of secular humanism. Our special mission as secular humanists is to strengthen and preserve a free market of ideas for a reasoned discussion about religion.

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander





Many secular humanists do not feel called on to proselytize and convert anyone to our nonbelief in a supernatural being. Our main mission is to "witness" that a reasonable, eminently viable, joyous alternative to religion does exist, and that empathetic caring can lead to at least as morally decent behavior as religion typically does.

Contrary to Siano's dismissive screed, the *Fighting Back* manual makes great suggestions for gracefully and effectively doing just that.

Robert F. Morse
Pompano Beach, Fla.

Reconstruction

Jacques Derrida and deconstruction are responsible for ACT-UP? Where does Curtis White (Letters, May 29) live? As a member of Cincinnati affiliates of ACT-UP, let me assure Mr. White that our critical and activist stance did not arise from, nor was it inspired by, deconstructionism, postmodernism or any post-Marxist seminars.

It came from an alienation and frustration that this screwed-up system of ours has always created, albeit in fits and starts.

American socialists are anti-intellectual? Sixty years of hindsight tells me

we've mostly been too intellectual, too certain of our theorizing and therefore less realistic than the "masses."

The real problem—no phantasm, this—is that the reactionaries are now well-organized, well-funded, well-networked, and enthusiastic, while the left is fragmented and miniscule. The left's greatest liveliness seems to be in seminars and learned journals, arguing over which postmodern savant to quote and which "text" to follow!

As a lifelong left-wing intellectual, I love theoretical disputations as much as anyone, but real historical change takes place whenever people get their dander up and organize—with or without insightful intellectual leadership. For every Subcomandante Marcos there seem to be a thousand academics debating deconstruction, logocentrism and all sorts of other chic ideas, while America goes down the tubes.

We live in the valley of the shadow of death. French philosophers? Give me activists, protesters, organizers! Real life is no mere text!

Laurence G. Wolf
Cincinnati

The real enemy

I just finished reading your editorial ("The '60s legacy to the violent right," *ITT*, May 29). Unfortunately, I think you missed the point. Yes, I would agree, the '60s left did "delegitimize" the government. We exposed its lies, hypocrisy, violence, and anti-democratic nature and intent. We all agreed then that it was OK to ignore or subvert "evil" laws, in the name of freedom, justice, and equality.

But who was frightened by the dangerous left? Did barricades go up around the White House, were metal

detectors installed at the local Social Security office? Or did Mobil Oil, IBM, AT&T, and Citicorp pursue such security measures? Who, and what, did we really threaten?

The difference between us and the right is that we know who the real enemy is. It's capitalism, not some petty bureaucrat.

I don't believe the federal government will attack the militias like they attacked us. These militiamen "opt out" by "buying in." They buy weapons and ammunition, they stockpile survival equipment, and they work for corporations and law enforcement. I think big business likes them. We, on the other hand, opted out by "dropping out."

Ken Eidel
Washington

Inflammatory

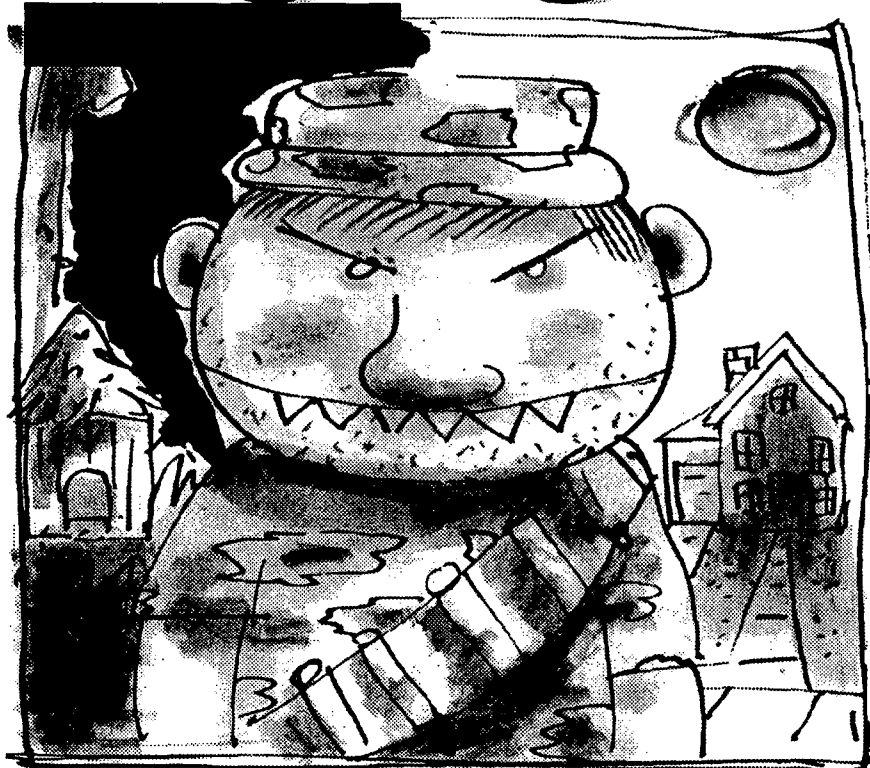
Your editorial on "The '60s legacy to the violent right" made good sense up to the point where you corrupted the argument with several pejorative terms. To say that federal agents "murdered" the wife and son of a white supremacist is to accuse the agents of deliberately selecting these two unfortunates for elimination—which was not the case at all, as you well know. And did agents then go on to "provoke the slaughter" at Waco? Your words imply that the agents intended to effect the deaths of the victims, which, again, you know is not true.

Both incidents were tragic enough without *ITT* using inflammatory language to distort the circumstances and stir passion anew. Let's leave the paranoia to the radical right where it has such a congenial home!

John G. Sproat
Columbia, S.C.

Editor's note: No, we don't mean to imply that the agents intended the deaths of the victims in either case, but we do believe that they unnecessarily and illegally violated the rights of the victims with wanton disregard for their lives and safety. In our book, that's murder.

INSHORT



© 1995 PETER HANNAN

OKLAHOMA BLOWBACK

Why is everyone suddenly so surprised to learn that we are a nation hip-deep in militias and mercenaries? For the past 40 years, such groups and individuals have been virtual instruments of U.S. foreign policy. Some of the same people preparing for war against the feds got their training in the jungles of Central America and elsewhere, working for the very government they now take up arms to defend themselves against.

Low-intensity warfare, of the kind conducted in Latin America and Africa throughout the '70s and '80s, requires proxy armies and mercenary soldiers. And so, during these years, when "extraordinary" and illegal measures were presumed necessary, the CIA and other agencies happily dipped into the shadowy world of for-hire soldiers. They, in turn, called up reinforcements from the domestic, paramilitary ultraright, arming and training them with cash and supplies provided by U.S. taxpayers. What we are now seeing, in the Oklahoma bombing and in entities like the Michigan Militia, is in part the legacy of these covert wars abroad.

Today's paramilitary culture has its roots in the CIA-led 1956 overthrow



Around the World

For coming in first in the 1995 National Geography Bee, Chris Galezka won a \$25,000 college scholarship—and a free ten day vacation to a site of his choice. He decided to go to ... Minnesota's

Mall of America.



2.1

"I saw pictures of the Mall of America," he explains, "and it looks like it's 20

times the size of St. Peter's [Basilica, in Rome]." Plus, one hardly needs to add, it has ample parking, which even the Pope, for all his connections, isn't always able to guarantee.

Bum rap

Bob Dole is not alone in blaming the ills of the world on rap lyrics, a recent story in the *San Francisco Chronicle* suggests. Jeffrey Alan Hohn, a Bay Area youth charged with several counts of robbery, argues that he was led to a life of crime after listening to a rap song that included the couplet: "We need the cash/ we rob a liquor store." Master P., the rapper responsible for the song, says that he did not mean to encourage

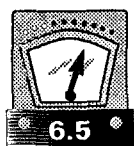


4.5

stealing, and points out that the last line of the song suggests that "crime don't pay." "You've got to listen to the whole tape," he insists.

Wig wham bam

The Holy City is once again the site of a bitter battle, the Knight-Ridder/Tribune news service reports—and this time it involves wigs. The ultra-Orthodox women in the Geula neighborhood in Jerusalem are required by their beliefs to cover their hair, and many have chosen to do so with wigs. But in recent months, posters have



sprung up around the neighborhood warning women to avoid "immodest" wigs, and

one wig shop has been burned to the ground. "When the messiah comes, the first thing he will do is eliminate the wig," one poster proclaims. "A woman who wears a wig is preparing herself for hell."



Stunned by a stupid statement? Nauseated by a noxious news item? Livid about a ludicrous lie? Contact the Appall-O-Meter, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Models Inc.-redible!
2. Infomercial irritating
3. Plausibly deniable
4. L.A.P.D. blue
5. Bob Dole-idious
6. Raoul Cédras-ûc
7. Ollie North nasty
8. Holiday in Rwanda
9. Zhirinovskyesque
10. Where have you gone, Joe Goebbels?

of the duly-elected Arbenz government in Guatemala. In preparation for the operation, President Eisenhower and the CIA opened a training camp in Opa Locka, Fla., to prepare the forces of Castillo Armas for an invasion of Guatemala. In the early 60s, the Kennedy administration also used irregular forces, trained throughout the South, for its crusade against Castro and "communism" in Central America.

But it was during the Reagan-Bush years that America's paramilitary culture had its renaissance, with homegrown mercenaries preparing for what they hoped would eventually be a two-front war aimed not only at destabilizing the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, but Fidel Castro as well. In the late '80s, compounds with names like "Camp Ollie North" sprung up in places as unlikely as Bordentown, N.J., to train these wannabe invaders in close combat, special operations and munitions. Wary neighbors eventually had Camp North shut down, but similar operations were already well under way all over the U.S.

"Private" counterterrorism training camps sprouted up across the country, aiming to provide potential soldiers of fortune with the skills they needed to fight for hire in so-called low-intensity wars in Guatemala, El Salvador, Angola and Mozambique. The most famous of these training centers was SIONICS, Inc.; the acronym stood for Studies in Operational Negotiations of Insurgency and Counter-Subversion. Headquartered in Powder Springs, Ga., it was overseen by the late Lt. Gen. Mitchell Livingston WerBell, III, a man with ties to both the Klan and Lyndon LaRouche.

Even Richard Nixon's good soldier, G. Gordon Liddy, cashed in on the counterterrorism business during the boom years of the late '80s. His Liddy Academy, a subsidiary of G. Gordon Liddy and Associates, Inc., unapologetically pitched to mercenaries in training and charged a hefty \$3,000 for a 17-day course of study with a man who once locked himself in the trunk of his own car during an FBI stake-out.

During the '80s, worries about the dangers of "civilian disorder" led governors in several dozen states to revive their state militias (called State Defense Forces, or SDFs). Under the ultimate command of state governors, these forces received no federal monies and were supported in part through private and corporate donations. Naturally, as volunteer armies with little oversight, some of the SDFs attracted mercenaries, survivalists and racists.

For example, the chief recruiter for Utah's SDF, the Utah State Guard, distributed literature for the racist Aryan Nations from his recruiting booth at a gun show. The SDF had been overrun by members of the Aryan Nations and other similar organizations. Several violent felons had also found their way into the force. In 1987, Utah's governor all but disbanded the Utah State Guard, leaving only 31 officers out of a total cadre of 400 men.

The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported at the time that State Guard officers had traveled to Hayden Lake, Idaho, to train Aryan Nations "soldiers" at their own compound. And according to 1991 *Nation* investigation, State Guard members had also conducted training exercises in the Utah desert with live ammo and explosives, practiced assassinations, created an intelligence-gathering operation and even bought a phony police car with public funds.

Similarly, the Texas State Guard was forced to disband one of its units when its commander, a former mercenary for the government of Rhodesia, ordered his troops to dress in full army fatigues rather than official SDF uniforms—a breach of federal law. Further investigations turned up evidence that Texas State Guard members were planning to buy tanks and other armored vehicles and were conducting practice "drug raids" without authorization.

The war without has become the war within. Many of today's conspiracy theorists, POW hunters and militia members are embittered veterans of a visible, documented war in Indochina. Still others are the unnamed veterans of secret wars, screened for their killing capacity, trained by U.S. military personnel and stone silent about their "service" abroad. For some, apparently, the new battlefield is here, and now.

—Gerry O'Sullivan

"LITTLE MIAMI" VICE

A 40-mile swath of I-95 cuts through Robeson County, North Carolina, laying it open like a knife wound. A rough mid-point on the drug route from Miami and New York, the county has become yet another node of North American narcotrafficking. It is called "Little Miami" by those in the know. Drugs up from south Florida and drug money from up and down the seaboard blight this impoverished, rural hinterland. By market standards, drugs like cocaine are cheap in Robeson County; the lives of Native- and African-Americans caught up in the county's drug economy seem cheaper still. Violent crime outstrips that of other rural North Carolina counties by half, and the murder rate is 50 percent higher than Raleigh's.

To this Robeson County, Eddie Hatcher has returned—or very nearly, at least. From the front porch of his mother's trailer home on a sandhill outskirt of Hamlet in Richmond County, Hatcher can almost spit on Robeson, but he can't return there until his parole is up, perhaps early next year.

In February 1988, Hatcher and Timothy Jacobs, both Tuscarora Indians, entered the *Robesonian* newspaper office in the county seat of Lumberton with sawed-off shotguns, holding 17 people hostage for 10 hours. Hatcher and Jacobs claimed to possess information—including documentation of a federal informant—linking Sheriff Hubert Stone and his staff to the local drug trade. Hatcher also claimed to have information relating to the murders of as many as 20 African- and Native-American residents of Robeson County, whose investigations had been suspiciously handled by county law authorities. In one case, Kevin Stone—the sheriff's son and a deputy in the sheriff's department—had shot an unarmed drug dealer in the back of the head on a deserted road. The county coroner's inquest ruled it an accident after a cursory investigation.

The hostage-taking was an act of desperation for which Hatcher today expresses no remorse. Given the sheriff's department's reputed corruption and given the county's numerous mysterious gangland-style executions, Hatcher insists he had no other recourse.

When then-Gov. Jim Martin agreed to Hatcher and Jacobs' two primary demands—that an investigation be made into local law-enforcement wrongdoing and that they be allowed to surrender to the FBI—the two men released their hostages unharmed. A federal jury found them innocent of federal hostage-taking and firearms violations charges, reasoning that the men had cause to fear for their lives, but they were subsequently brought up on state charges. Hatcher and Jacobs each negotiated a plea on state kidnapping charges and received sentences, respectively, of 18 years and six years.

On May 3, Hatcher was released to house arrest. As it turned out, it wasn't the merits of his case, but his diagnosis with AIDS that sprang him. Despite a relatively clean prison record, he was repeatedly denied parole until he was diagnosed. It was the prospect of a man Amnesty International considered a

MEDIA WATCH

By Jennifer Gonnerman

Blackballing birth control

A quarter of a century ago, every major television network was willing to run public service announcements (PSAs) promoting birth control. Now it's not quite so simple to get the message on the air. A new PSA campaign sponsored by Planned Parenthood has run into major stumbling blocks in its first target city: New York. NBC, ABC and Fox have all turned down the spots, while CBS remains undecided.

"Birth control. Try it. It works." That's the PSA's innocuous message. One of the spots features lottery balls spinning and warns viewers not to rely on luck in avoiding pregnancy. In another, hands rip open a condom package; a voice-over observes "it's easier than putting on a diaper." The spots themselves are straightforward; getting them on the air is the challenge.

"We have a policy not to air PSAs on either side of that issue," explains a press flack for NBC's New York affiliate. Apparently, this policy wasn't in effect a quarter of a century ago, when the three major networks first aired spots promoting birth control. The last time a birth control PSA ran on a major network was 1985. But today, when some 90 percent of women of childbearing age use birth control, New York City stations are balking. Says the NBC spokesperson: "There are groups that have problems with PSAs promoting birth control."

One of the most vocal of these groups is the Family Research Council, a Washington D.C.-based lobbying

group headed by Gary Bauer, a former Reagan aide who recently helped Bob Dole hone his attack on Hollywood depravity. Last year, when the federally funded Centers for Disease Control produced PSAs promoting condom use to prevent AIDS, Bauer was one of its loudest critics. According to his spokeswoman, Kristi Hamrick, the birth control PSAs encourage sexual activity. Airing them, she claims, will produce more unwanted pregnancies—and more business for Planned Parenthood. “With one hand, [Planned Parenthood representatives] preach contraceptive sex. With the other they make money from abortions,” she says. “Their motives ... might be profit.”

So far, this tortured logic has not stopped television executives across the country from expressing interest in the new PSAs. In Seattle, ABC has already requested copies of the spots. And in some parts of Texas, all three major networks have given the green light.

As Planned Parenthood spokeswoman Sarah Di Troia observes, stations outside of New York, where the major networks have their headquarters, tend to be less conservative because they don't operate under the watchful eyes of network executives. And so, despite the initial difficulties, many family planning advocates are hopeful about the campaign.

“We're not talking about abortion,” Di Troia explains. “People have very set ideas on that issue. But birth control is a little stickier. To take a stand against birth control is to take a stand against sex, and that's not a very popular position.”

political prisoner dying in prison of AIDS, Hatcher believes, that changed Gov. Jim Hunt's mind.

Little has changed in Robeson County since Hatcher was hauled off to prison seven years ago. The schools are administered a bit more equitably, and Sheriff Stone has retired and been replaced by a Native American. But the county's per capita income is third lowest in the state at just under \$10,000, significantly less for the blacks and Native Americans who comprise roughly two-thirds of the population.

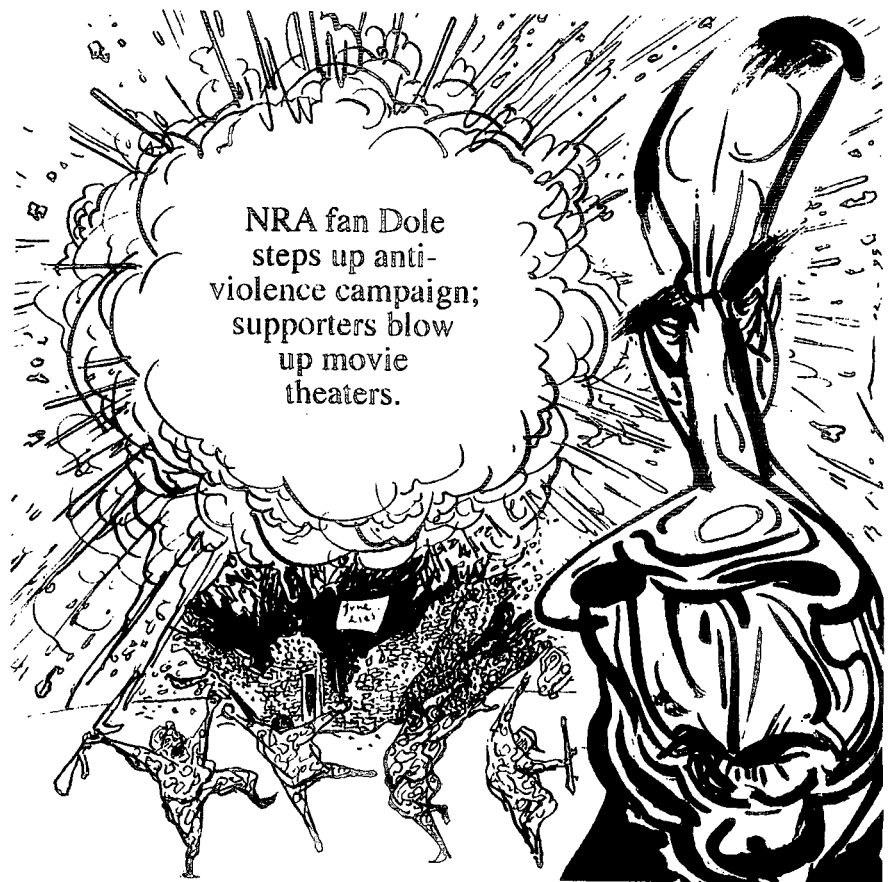
More ominous is the continued devaluation of life in Robeson County, both in and out of the courtroom. Some years back former Robeson County District Attorney Joe Freeman Britt, dubbed the “World's Deadliest Prosecutor” by the *Guinness Book of Records* for his death-row proclivity, said, “There's a little kernel in all of us that says we must preserve human life. It's the prosecutor's job to extinguish that flame.” Two months after Hatcher's hostage-taking incident, Julian Pierce, a prominent local Native-American lawyer who was running against Britt for a Superior Court judgeship, was assassinated in his home. The putative primary suspect in the case, a casual acquaintance of Pierce's, died in an alleged suicide before he could be arrested. In what could be seen as a vote of no confidence for county government, Pierce posthumously defeated Britt in the election.

His weight diminished by AIDS, Eddie Hatcher vows to continue his crusade against corruption in Robeson County. “I'm going to live to be about 60,” he says. “I'm looking to go for awhile.” He's got his work cut out for him.

—Taylor Sisk

Tomorrow's News Tonight

By Steve Brodner



E.T.C.

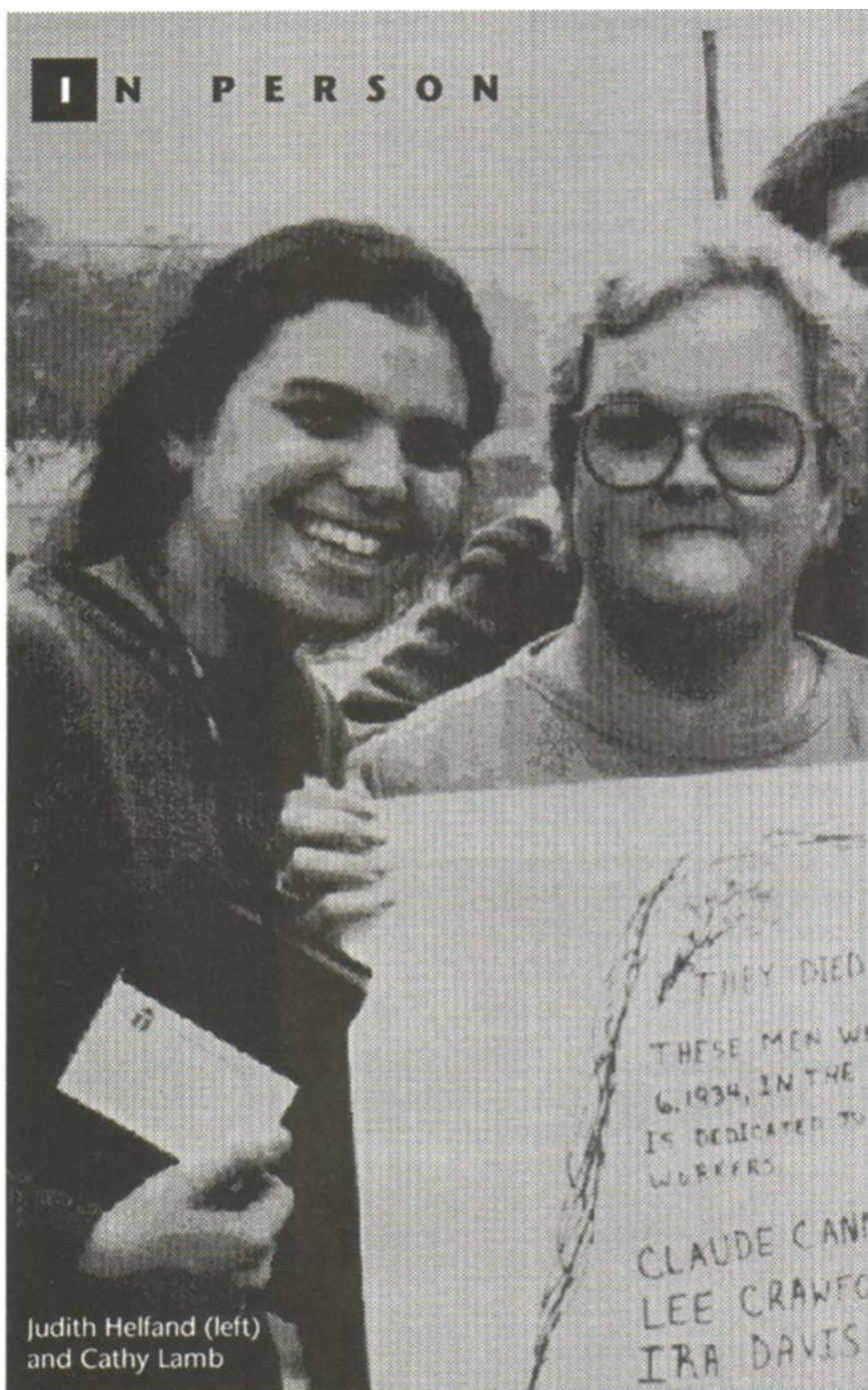
By Fred Spielberg

Chilean consensus

As Fred Solowey pointed out in the last issue of *ITT* ("Privatization Party," June 12), Chile's newly legal, moderate "left"—which came out from under the Pinochet regime's thumb seven years ago—has shown extraordinary forbearance toward its onetime oppressors. As partners in Chile's center-left *Concertación* government, former victims and critics of the junta are now upholding the conciliatory ideal of consensus.

That is not to say, however, that there are not old scores to settle. On May 30, Chile's Supreme Court ratified the sentences handed down on two former directors of the now-defunct secret police, DINA. General Manuel Contreras and Brigadier Lieutenant Pedro Espinosa were convicted in 1991 of ordering the 1976 assassination of exiled Chilean socialist leader Orlando Letelier (which also killed Letelier's American aide, Ronnie Moffitt). On June 6, the court accepted the final legal recourse of Contreras' and Espinoza's lawyers, agreeing to discount time already served from their sentences (seven and six years, respectively).

The case provides unexpected—but slight—consolation to the victims of thousands of human rights crimes committed in Pinochet's 17-year reign. In the political compromise that brought Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin to the presidency in 1989, the Chilean military



©HARD TIMES PRODUCTIONS

Judith Helfand (left) and Cathy Lamb

MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT

Cathy Lamb honors fallen heroes

Early on the morning of Sept. 6, 1934, 8-year-old J.P. Lamb looked out his bedroom window and noticed that something was going on at the nearby Chiquola textile mill in Honea Path, S.C. He snuck out of the house and went to the mill, where workers were picketing as part of the General Textile Strike of 1934. A woman pulled him to the ground when the shooting started.

The boy then rushed home, climbed through his bedroom window and sought cover in bed. Back at the mill, 20 textile workers had been shot—shot by deputized colleagues and townspeople who were loyal to mill manage-

secured a blanket amnesty for all human rights abuses committed before 1978. But the Letelier case was exempted from this amnesty, probably because of pressure from the U.S. government. And it would probably never have reached a resolution but for the activism of Fabiola Letelier—sister to Orlando and a well-respected human rights lawyer in her own right—and the impartial investigation of judge Adolfo Bañados, who, along with other justices, was reported to have received death threats. But Contreras has been personally linked to other major human rights crimes, and many Chileans are outraged that he will serve a few years in prison at the most.

The conduct of this country's mainstream politicians during this affair seems to suggest that five years after the end of the dictatorship there is still considerable self-censorship in Chilean society. Socialist party leader Camilo Escalona recently spoke of the need to avoid either "an anti-military escalation or a confrontational attitude toward the Armed Forces."

Two decades of dictatorship have also succeeded in depoliticizing most of the new generation of young people, who are now more concerned with securing jobs than with social justice. With one of the highest growth rates in Latin America and invitations pending to join NAFTA and the Southern Cone MERCOSUR, Chile is anxious to avoid unearthing those messy details from the past.

ment. Seven strikers died.

The little town, 40 miles south of Greenville, would never be the same again. After the killing, 10,000 mourners poured into Honea Path. Then the silence set in. Those born after the tragedy, like Cathy Lamb, J.P.'s daughter, never learned about the shootings.

"The law in this town had killed seven people," says Lamb, explaining the decades of silence. "If you didn't work in the mill here, you didn't work. There was nothing else to do. My daddy told me he was afraid that if he told me about the shooting, I would be afraid to join a union. And he didn't want me to be afraid, because he had been a union member."

In fact, Cathy Lamb did follow in her father's footsteps. At the age of 24, she had moved to the nearby town of Belton, where she gave up hair-dressing for a better-paying job at the York Shirtmakers factory. In 1989, ACTWU targeted York. Lamb joined up and became part of the organizing drive. "Next thing I knew they voted me in as president of the local," she says. "And then they started to send me to conventions and this, and workshops and that. Next thing I knew, I knew what I was doing." The plant closed in 1993, and Lamb enrolled in a junior college to become a paralegal, specializing in labor law.

Lamb first learned of Honea Path's secret in 1992 at an ACTWU convention, where filmmakers Judith Helfand and George Stoney gave a talk on their current project *The Uprising of '34*, which will air on June 27 as part of PBS's P.O.V. series. (See *ITT*, June 12.)

"I was 38 years old and had never heard about it," says Lamb. She asked her dad about the strike, and he contacted the film's producers. "The next thing I knew they were in the house."

Lamb began helping out on the film. In August 1994, she and Helfand were shooting in Honea Path. "It was real hot," says Lamb, "and I was tired and I wanted to go home. I said, 'Let's just put up a monument and go home.' And Judith said, 'Oh, that is a wonderful idea. Why don't we do that?' 'Do what?' I asked. And she said, 'Put up a monument.'"

Lamb didn't think the town council, after six decades of silence, would go for it. But the families of the seven dead men thought it was a wonderful idea. And Honea Path Mayor Billy Gilmer didn't raise any objections. "See, he's my third cousin," says Lamb. "So, that didn't hurt anything."

"But these old men on the council looked at me as if I was crazy. They first didn't want to talk to me. They asked, 'Is this going to start something?'"

The old men, despite their reluctance, gave Lamb the go-ahead. "They probably thought, 'Well, she's just ranting and raving, she'll never get the money. What are we worried about?'" But two months later, Lamb and her husband, Robert, had raised \$2,000 from private donors, labor unions, and the ACLU, among others. At that point, says Lamb, "The council had to give us a place to put it."

So on Memorial Day, some 200 family members of the dead men gathered in Dogwood Park to dedicate the monument, a two-ton, burgundy-colored granite block that is inscribed with the last words of one of the seven dead strikers, Maxie Peterson: "They died for the rights of the working man." At the dedication ceremony, Mayor Gilmer spoke of healing. Some people cried. And Lamb pointed to a nearby school. "If one of the children in the school walks over here and says, 'Mama, what happened to that man?' and she can tell them, then it is all worth it."

— Wim Roefs

THE FIRST STONE

ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK

By Joel Bleifuss

Since the 104th Congress entered Washington, the Republican majority has been publicly chopping away at the foundations of American government. More quietly, however, GOP lawmakers have been honing legislation that would eviscerate the nation's progressive nonprofit organizations. Currently, these groups are waiting for the ax to fall, hoping only for a glancing blow. All of which begs the question: Is there something wrong with the way the progressive nonprofit community has involved itself in the political process?

Barbara Dudley, the executive director at Greenpeace U.S.A., has a grudging admiration for the discipline of right-wing nonprofits such as the Christian Coalition. "It is certainly something that you have never seen on the left," she says. "Maybe because we are not serious with our agenda. We whine about the White House a lot, but we haven't made many strides ourselves. We are too cynical and too divided."

And, perhaps, too ignorant about the tax laws that define the extent to which non-profit organizations can be involved in the political process. Non-profit groups that can accept tax-exempt donations are known as 501(c)(3)s, a name derived from the Internal Revenue Code. The government's tax code allows tax-exempt nonprofits to spend 20 percent of their budget for directly lobbying Congress on specific legislation. But it prohibits groups from engaging in electoral activities like working for or against candidates for public office. Any organization that repeatedly violates these strictures could forfeit its non-profit, tax-exempt status. And without that 501 (c)(3) status, a group loses its ability to attract tax-exempt donations and to receive grants from foundations.

"The insidious part of this is that nonprofits become self-censoring," says Dudley. "They eliminate all political activity from their quiver, because they are so afraid of the IRS when in fact the IRS restrictions are not that restrictive."

The Alliance for Justice, a Washington-based group, has published a series of reports that explain to both foundations and nonprofits what they can and cannot do under the

law. According to Nan Aron, the Alliance's president, "Progressive nonprofits have been deterred from actively involving themselves in legislative policy debates, in part because of the legal limitations, but also because funders, particularly foundation officials, are very nervous about nonprofits engaging in political advocacy, unjustifiably so."

The tax code does permit public-interest groups to spend up to \$1 million on face-to-face lobbying on Capitol Hill. But this provision may benefit Congress more than it does nonprofits. Such lobbying gives congresspeople, and their staffs, a chance to extract campaign donations, free meals and other forms of support from nonprofits. On the other hand, the tax code cur-

tails the ability of nonprofits to organize grassroots lobbying efforts. A nonprofit is allowed to spend, at the most, \$25,000 annually on local organizing for or against specific legislation. An indirect result of these restrictions on nonprofit lobbying has been the creation of a Washington-based public-interest community that is divorced from the grass roots.

In effect, nonprofit organizations, wittingly or not, have entered into a Faustian bargain. In exchange for a special tax status, public interest groups have permitted Congress to decide what they can and cannot do to influence national policy.

Now, the Republican right plans to rewrite the tax laws so that public-interest groups would be, in effect, put out of business, according to OMB Watch, a group founded in 1983 to monitor the Office of Management and Budget's attempts to advance the Reagan administration's deregulation agenda. The group's *OMB Watcher* reported on June 7 that plans are currently under way to, as the Republican right puts it, "defund the left."

In the House, Majority Leader Rep. Dick Armey (R-TX) and Virginia Thomas, wife of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, have been hatching various proposals to drastically curtail the political activities of the nonprofit sector. Thomas, a key Armey adviser, is the mastermind behind these initiatives. She told *OMB Watcher* that the details of the Republican proposals would be made public when they are introduced in Congress.

Those proposals are likely to include changes to the laws governing 501(c)(3)s. Lobbying could be redefined to include any form of public education around policy issues and then sharply curtailed. Groups that receive federal funds, like food pantries, could be prohibited from doing any kind of advocacy work. Violations of the new rules could lead to immediate suspension of 501 (c)(3) status, and thus to the loss of foundation revenue.

Right-wing interest groups would also be affected by these measures. But the right relies far less heavily on nonprofits, and is not involved in social service work. The right

also has more money, and it has an organized grassroots base that will keep it in business. Further, the right's most powerful nonprofit group, the Christian Coalition, is now obtaining a less politically restrictive nonprofit status. Although that status, known as 501(c)(4), prevents a group from receiving tax-deductible contributions or grants from foundations, it also allows for far more intensive grassroots political efforts. (Greenpeace, Public Citizen, the Sierra Club and the League of Conservation Voters are progressive 501(c)(4) nonprofits, which all have sister organizations with 501(c)(3) status.)

Currently, congressional aides and researchers at right-wing think-tanks like the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute are poring over the records of public-interest nonprofits, compiling information on their political activities. The *National Journal* reports that their target list so far includes Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), the Children's Defense Fund, Families USA, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the National Council of Senior Citizens, and others.

Entering into the blacklisting spirit, Armev has put the nation's top corporations on notice for making charitable donations to nonprofits like those listed above. In a March 24 letter to his Republican House colleagues, Armev wrote, "Many companies are using their philanthropic budgets to support public policy advocacy groups.

... Big business is firmly behind the welfare state. Corporations gave liberal advocacy groups \$3.42 for every dollar that went to conservatives in 1992. ... Voters have demanded an end to big government's ... welfare-driven cultural decay. ... I urge you to ... challenge your contacts in the corporate world to change this disturbing pattern." His letter was accompanied by information that singled out Monsanto for grants to the Children's Defense Center and the NAACP of East St. Louis, Ill. Other supposed left-leaning corporations are Coca-Cola, Borden and Anheuser-Busch.

What are nonprofits doing to defend themselves from their congressional attackers? "At this point, we don't have a good strategy for holding legislators accountable," says Gary Bass, the executive director of OMB Watch. "We just don't do that stuff. We sit in a room and strategize about the best research report."

Bass believes that the public-interest community would be well served by the creation of a "broad, nonprofit sector alliance" that would be committed to principles of social justice and able to mobilize a vast grassroots constituency.

Currently, Bass is the chair of the Citi-

zens for Sensible Safeguards, a coalition effort that was established earlier this year to counter the deregulation proposals in Congress. The 230 organizations that make up that coalition represent the interests of more than 100 million people. (See "The First Stone," June 12, 1995.) "Our reach is truly enormous," he says. "But we have never as a nonprofit sector viewed ourselves as a political force. If we ever turned that into political muscle, that would be a tremendously powerful force."

Perhaps the right understands just that. Grover Norquist, the executive director of Americans for Tax Reform and a member of House Speaker Newt Gingrich's inner circle, has been a key strategist in "defunding the left." When Norquist hears the word "nonprofit" he reaches for his revolver. He told the *National Journal's* Jeff Shear: "We will hunt [these liberal groups] down one by one and extinguish their funding sources. With control over Congress and the White House, it's all over. We will go back and sue people who broke the law, who were ripping off taxpayers to do political work."

At the Heritage Foundation, vice president Kate O'Beirne, who is working closely with Gingrich and Armev, admits that it will take a broad-based attack to dismantle the left. "The tentacles of these liberal organizations are so deep and ubiquitous," says O'Beirne, "that there is no magic bullet." ▴

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan



BLEAK HOUSE

The second city's "second ghetto"

*Why Chicago's
housing
catastrophe
shouldn't
undermine the
case for public
housing.*

By David Moberg
CHICAGO

Chicago's public housing projects have become national symbols of urban despair and, for many critics of public action against poverty, of the failure of government. The Robert Taylor Homes, which dominate one of the poorest and dreariest neighborhoods in America, stretch for miles down South State Street like some high-rise metropolitan gulag. The children who grow up here, like those from the Chicago project depicted in Alex Kotlowitz's *There Are No Children Here*, are inured to deprivation and violence as facts of life. To make matters worse, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), the agency responsible for these troubled residences, has proved incompetent to manage them.

A string of CHA failures—fraud in the employee pension fund, gross mismanagement of the federal rent subsidy program (known as Section 8), wide-

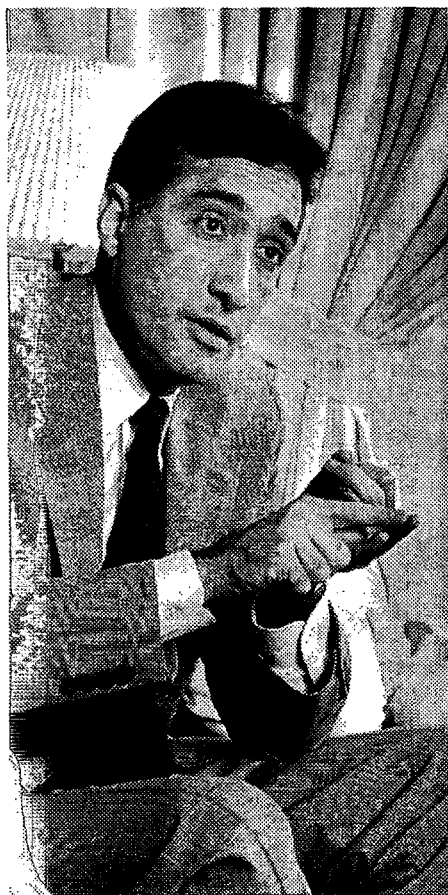
spread corruption and the failure to use \$600 million in available federal funds for desperately needed maintenance—finally provoked the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to take over the authority's responsibilities in late May. There were also questions about how CHA Chairman Vince Lane's personal real estate business may have influenced his actions as the authority's chief. But the takeover decision may also have been motivated by political considerations: Renovation planned for a project near the site of the 1996 Democratic Convention was moving too slowly.

The real tragedy of Chicago's public housing, however, is not so much the CHA's failure to manage its properties—after all, the authority's current administration is not dramatically worse than it has been over the past three decades. Rather, it is the longstanding failure of local and national political leaders to confront both the enduring social effects of racism and the economic forces that perpetuate and worsen economic inequality. That failure, compounded by the patronage politics that have made Chicago notorious, set the CHA on its doomed path. Now the Republicans may use its crisis as the pretext for a broader attack on public housing that will simply worsen, rather than redress, the inequality and racial unfairness that deformed Chicago's public housing.

Public housing can work. In Europe even conservative governments, like the new Chirac regime in France, embrace it. In the United States, only about 90 of 3,300 public housing authorities are "troubled," with Chicago the worst of the lot. The biggest, in New York, is regarded as well-managed. Even in the Chicago projects, many individuals find not only shelter but community, and there is always a 10-year waiting list of many thousands for the better locations. The lesson from this experience seems clear: Public housing works best when it serves a mix of incomes, not just the poorest, and when it is designed to be comparable to private housing.

By contrast, public housing in Chicago became an instrument for ghettoizing the poorest blacks, compounding the problems of discrimination and poverty. After World War II CHA director Elizabeth Wood cautiously expanded the racial integration of Chicago's projects, but white resistance led to her dismissal. As historian Arnold Hirsch observed in *Making The Second Ghetto*, the street violence against African-Americans who moved into white neighborhoods and the urban renewal plans of the downtown elite ensured that blacks would be contained within a new, spasmodically expanding ghetto. The big CHA projects were located and designed to keep blacks within that ghetto, and public housing became identified overwhelmingly with blacks.

During the 1960s, both national and CHA policies shift-



HUD Secretary
Henry Cisneros

ignored management of tenants, failing both to screen new residents and to remove troublemakers.

In 1969, a federal judge ruled in the *Gautreaux* case (in which a CHA tenant challenged the policies on concentrating public housing in black neighborhoods) that the CHA had deliberately discriminated in creating segregated public housing, and ordered the agency to build new housing scattered throughout the city. Instead, the city responded by virtually freezing new CHA construction. (Only in recent years has the CHA constructed a few thousand new units, and they were built in mixed Latino and white "transitional" neighborhoods. The CHA still has built virtually no new units in white middle-class communities.)

In 1976, the courts, in a follow-up to the *Gautreaux* decision, ordered another remedy, giving CHA residents a limited number of rent subsidy vouchers to move to largely white suburban areas. Though it was conceived as a desegregation measure, this second court order—which involved only 5,700 families in its first 18 years—helped the children of the families who moved to the white, middle-income suburbs get better educations and jobs than their peers who remained in the city. Unlike the normal Section 8 voucher program, which does not help recipients find housing, the *Gautreaux* project screened a limited number of volunteer participants each year to find highly responsible tenants and counseled them about finding suit-

ed to discourage working-class blacks from remaining in public housing and gave preference to the poor, turning the projects into housing of last resort. Mayor Richard J. Daley used the CHA as a source of patronage jobs and as a means of controlling votes. Corrupt officials like Charles Swibel, who for two decades was simultaneously a power at the CHA, a private developer and a political dealmaker, let the projects deteriorate. The CHA neglected maintenance and

able apartments in the suburbs.

Even though this program enjoyed some limited success, most of Chicago's public housing and even subsidized private housing remained heavily segregated and poorly managed. A culture of corruption, incompetence and indifference so permeated the CHA that even as blacks gained more jobs and control at the authority, the situation did not improve significantly.

When Mayor Eugene Sawyer appointed Vince Lane to take over the CHA seven years ago, Lane promised to improve the projects and initiated controversial "sweeps" to clear out guns and illegal residents (though the CHA officially houses 86,000 people, as many as 140,000 may live in the buildings). Eventually Lane came to advocate a "deconcentration" of the poor, a vision that current HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros embraces. Though never fully spelled out, Lane's deconcentration scheme probably would have demolished some (perhaps a fifth or more) of the high-rise buildings, converting CHA projects into mixed-income communities, and encouraging the dispersal of CHA residents throughout the metropolitan area with rental vouchers.

Lane wanted to use federal modernization money and private loans to fund construction of new, low-rise housing by private developers, including not-for-profit groups (which have been among the major builders of affordable housing in Chicago in recent years). He also hoped to involve nonprofits, private firms, and resident groups in the management of existing CHA projects. But the enabling legislation died in the GOP's scorched-earth attack on Clinton-backed legislation late in the last congressional session.

Many CHA residents supported Lane's vision of the CHA, but not without reservations. For example, despite the sociological arguments for dispersing the poor, typically half or more of CHA residents don't want to move; they just want less crime, better buildings and competent management. Similarly, many blacks—especially CHA residents—regard demolition plans as disguised land-grabbing. The desirable goal of creating mixed-income communities, they fear, could turn into another form of urban renewal, which an earlier generation of critics labeled "Negro removal," or at least a purge of the poor. Even HUD objected to Lane's proposed rebuilding of the Cabrini-Green project, a scheme from which lawyers and businesses with ties to both Lane and current Mayor Richard M. Daley would have profited handsomely. In Lane's plan, only 167 of 685 new or rehabbed units would have been reserved for low-income people, and offering vouchers for other housing to Cabrini-Green's displaced poor would have been inadequate without expanded construction and renovation of low-income housing.

The popular critique of high-rises may also be oversold. Though some high-rises deserve to be torn down because of poor design or construction, two at Lake Parc Place, on the city's South Side near the lakefront, have

recently been renovated and are being successfully run by a strong resident management council representing carefully screened, mixed-income tenants.

Lane's strategy of scattering poor residents throughout the city also runs the risk that new construction won't be able to accommodate both the extremely needy and the new moderate income residents. In the '80s, Democrats, fearing that Reagan simply wanted to eliminate public housing, insisted on the construction of a replacement before any housing unit could be eliminated. The rigidity of that rule, however, has hampered some demolition and redevelopment work, and has left housing stock depleted.

Cisneros shares much of Lane's perspective, as was reflected in the "HUD Reinvention" proposal his office released last March. Cisneros wants public housing authorities to demolish the worst units and renovate the remainder. Then there would be a transition to a new regime, in which housing authorities would get no capital or operating money from Washington. Subsidies for privately and publicly owned buildings, which constitute 70 percent of housing aid disbursements, would be eliminated. Instead, renters would receive certificates providing a subsidy for any place they choose to live, within HUD rent limits. Public housing residents could use their certificates for either public or private housing, if they could find it. But if, as is likely, insufficient money is allocated for public housing renovation, it will be hard for those projects to compete and survive, and harder still for certificate (or voucher) holders to find suitable housing.

Joel Werth of the Metropolitan Planning Council, a non-profit Chicago planning group, argues that there would be a shortfall of 3,000 three-bedroom apartments and 1,400 one-bedroom units if all CHA residents moved into the private market. But even that understates the problem, because landlords do not have to accept federally subsidized renters, and former public housing residents are likely to face widespread discrimination. Already a new suburban ghetto of black section 8 subsidized housing is emerging south of Chicago. Without systematic counseling of renters and strong open housing initiatives, Cisneros's voucher plan could likely end up simply reconcentrating poor blacks in new areas.

Also, there's the risk that a big influx of former public housing residents would drive up rents at the low end of the market—hurting the poor without housing assistance—and could simply worsen the financial problems of the CHA. The National Housing Law Project argues that the HUD changes would inevitably produce more homelessness in many cities. Furthermore, many of the private units theoretically available aren't desirable. "The big beneficiaries [of the HUD strategy] will be slumlords," argues Rob Sadowsky, executive director of the Chicago Mutual Housing Network, a nonprofit advocacy coalition.

Despite these problems, the idea of "deconcentrating" the poor—encouraging them to seek housing throughout the metropolitan area and rebuilding public housing as mixed-

income communities—is a wise one. In recent years, partly because the poor have been losing ground in both welfare and income from jobs, public housing has become even more a ghetto of the extremely poor. Nationally, the median income of public housing families is about \$6,100—or 17 percent of the area median. In 1980, public housing families received 33 percent of the area median.

It is necessary both to preserve and improve remaining public housing. "With the low-income housing market virtually gone, we need to preserve what we have, and public housing is the only guaranteed low-income stock," argues Edward Lazere, an analyst with the Washington-based Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. In Chicago, from 1980 to 1990, low-income families outside of CHA—which means nearly 90 percent of such families—lost access to 125,000 units renting for \$500 or less, as rent increased or apartments were destroyed or converted to condominiums.

CHA should not only save existing public housing in black areas but build more housing in those needy areas, argues retired Loyola University professor of social work J.S. Fuerst. "What a ridiculous thing to tear down the projects when you've simply got to get rid of 10 or 20 percent of families that are hard-core problems and put in moderate-sized families," he says, "and then let people know this is a pretty good place to live." By selecting tenants carefully and enforcing tough rules on behavior, Fuerst claims, the CHA could return to the days when it provided satisfactory homes for a diverse, low-income population.

Building new public housing is hardly in the cards. Most new construction ended in the early 1970s under Nixon, and the subsequent system of bribing private developers to build housing for poor people has not worked better. This system has been rife with financial corruption and shoddy construction practices, particularly during the Reagan administration. Even though these publicly subsidized private developments have higher-income renters than those in public housing, many of them are now in as bad or worse condition than the more widely criticized public housing stock.

It has long been clear that regular maintenance, decentralized authority, better screening and eviction of bad tenants, more social services and neighborhood businesses and better links to jobs would improve the CHA. The Wells Community Initiative at one of the older projects on Chicago's South Side has started, with foundation support, programs of landscaping, community policing, pregnancy prevention and other social services that have helped set the stage for a more mixed-income area.

Unfortunately, despite the history of bipartisan endorsement of subsidized housing, congressional Republicans are taking steps to virtually eliminate housing support for the poor. In broad outline the House and Senate budget resolutions are similar. Over seven years, the House plan would cut operating subsidies 30 percent below current levels and cut modernization funds for public housing by 15 percent.

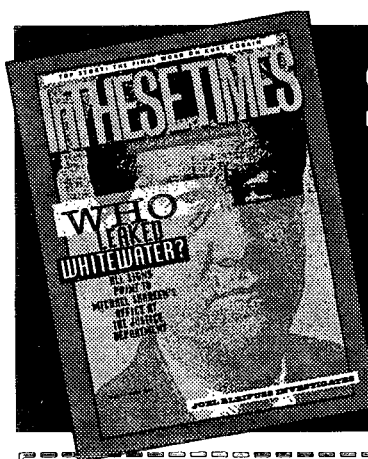
The House budget would stop annual increases in the number of rent-subsidy vouchers that have been approved every year since the voucher program began in 1974. It would only renew half of all vouchers that are turned back, for example, when a family moves above eligible income levels. It would increase tenant rental share from 30 to 35 percent of income. HUD estimates the House changes would deprive 1.3 million families of rental subsidies after seven years. At a time when the Republicans are also planning to slash welfare and reduce the earned-income tax credit for the working poor—whose incomes are already shrinking—this will only escalate impoverishment and intensify the nation's housing crisis.

Yet there is no discussion of cuts in the nation's biggest housing-subsidy program: the home mortgage interest deduction, which allows homeowners to deduct the interest they pay on home mortgages from their taxable income. In 1988, the federal government spent about \$35 billion on housing subsidies for families making \$50,000 and more through the mortgage interest deduction. At the same time, it spent a total of \$10 billion on families making less than \$10,000 a year in all the government housing programs now under attack.

The mortgage interest deduction now unites the rich and the middle class, even though the rich benefit most and lower-income homeowners often do not benefit because they do not claim deductions. With public housing relegated to the poorest of the poor, and primarily to minorities, it has no political constituency, except perhaps city mayors. But, as Occidental College professor of public policy Peter Dreier and National Housing Institute president John Atlas argue in "Mansions on the hill" (see page 22), it is possible to redistribute housing subsidies away from the rich to benefit a political coalition of low- to middle- or even upper middle-income homeowners and renters. They propose replacing the mortgage interest deduction with a graduated homeowner tax credit that would limit subsidies for the wealthy but make credits available for moderate-income families.

In the past, national housing policy has been crippled by the continued deference of politicians to the needs of private housing developers. Federal subsidies have split a natural coalition of low- to moderate-income families, turning white working-class homeowners against poor minorities, while actually redistributing income to the rich. In Chicago politicians' capitulation to racial fears and prejudices of both homeowners and the downtown elite further distorted the workings of the CHA, leading to the mismanagement that now plagues the people warehoused in its ill-kept buildings.

Yet as bad as current conditions are, the Republican plans would make matters worse, deepening further the inequities of income and race that national housing policy should have confronted long ago. Much as housing advocates and other liberals may feel the need to fight such cut-backs, over the long run their best hope is to create a broad-based political coalition to demand mixed-income—and ethnically non-exclusive—neighborhoods.



Subscribe to ITT!

☐ NEW SUBSCRIPTION.

You'll receive your first issue in 4-6 weeks. Please check price and terms below. ASTY

☐ RENEW NOW.

We'll extend your current subscription for as long as you like. This saves you worries about expiring and helps us save money and the environment by not sending renewal notices and bills. ARTY

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

MOVING:

Fill out old address above, and new address below. Allow 4-6 weeks for change.

NEW ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

☐ WHAT A GREAT GIFT IDEA!

(Just try and find a gift with more thought behind it. Fill out your name above and the lucky person's name here.) XSTHY

NAME OF RECIPIENT

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

PRICES & TERMS.....

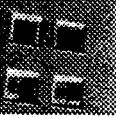
- ☐ One year, 26 issues: \$35.95 ☐ Six months, 13 issues: \$19.95
☐ Institutional, one year: \$59.00
☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MC

ACCOUNT NUMBER / EXPIRATION DATE

Canadian orders, add: \$27.50 (one year), \$13.50 (six months) postage. All other foreign orders add: \$41.00 (one year), \$20.50 (six months).

Mail to: IN THESE TIMES Customer Service,
 308 Hill St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054
 Or call: 1-800-827-0270

BLEAK HOUSE



California schemin'

*How
Jack Kemp's
affordable
housing
crusade
turned into a
bonanza for
developers.*

By Jeff Elliott

In current political mythology, former U.S. Congressman and Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp is enshrined as that rarest of creatures, the compassionate conservative. Standing athwart the Reagan-Bush era's punishing cuts to social welfare programs, Kemp, so the story goes, fought to increase his agency's budget and "empower" poor communities.

But in practice, Kemp only offered mild variations on the Reaganite theme of deregulation, trusting an unrestricted free-market to solve all of society's ills. One typical Kemp program was HOPE, a labored acronym for "Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere." Selling public housing to the poor, Kemp argued, would solve the problems of our blight-

ed inner cities. Another idea was a long-time Republican favorite, the tax credit. Give the poor a low-income housing tax credit and they can buy new homes or rehabilitate older ones.

These and other plans looked great on paper, but failed in practice. Little of the scores of millions of dollars these programs administered actually reached the truly needy, and the programs benefitted investors far more than impoverished tenants. Apart from the obvious paradox of expecting the poor to buy their way out of poverty, the tax credit, like most Reagan-era reforms, became a subsidy for the rich, with as little as 13 percent of the benefits going to the poor. A 1992 congressional study by the Congressional Budget Office found bankers and real estate developers skimming up to 30 cents from every federal dollar spent by the program.

Kemp's "empowerment" rhetoric originated on the left. As one of his aides cheerfully explained to the *New York Times*, "that's what's fun about [the slogan]—stealing the left's own words." And the plagiarism didn't

stop there: NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) once referred to elitist homeowners who wanted to keep the poor out of their communities. But in Kemp's hands, the term meant anyone opposing real estate development. All this sleight of hand required was for builders to say the magic words: affordable housing.

Though Kemp continues to market "empowerment" through his private "Empower America" foundation, his affordable housing agenda remains his most enduring legacy to American housing policy. It has become a battle cry, uniting a coalition of often unwitting church and community groups with construction-industry special interests. And the NIMBY ploy has also been successful. Opposing affordable housing projects makes liberals and progressives feel like snobs, fighting to keep the less fortunate away from their neighborhoods.

In 1991, under Kemp's supervision, HUD issued an influential report, "Not in My Back Yard: Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing." The report goes much further than simply impugning local planning initiatives with the taint of elitism. It calls for the removal of environmental laws, the retirement of many planning measures, and the enactment of substantial tax breaks for developers. In essence, it seeks to remove any restrictions on building anything, anywhere—as long as it can be passed off somehow as "affordable housing."

This master plan was written by the 22-member Kemp Commission, a lopsided group of bankers, builders, and right-wing policy wonks. In their view, builders have the right to build almost anything they want—even if it overloads public services such as water and sewer systems. The

government should “require localities to include a range of residential use categories that permit, *as a right*, duplex, two-family, and triplex housing.” (Emphasis added.) That “as a right” sent developers’ hearts aflutter: They had long sought rubber-stamp project approval, without lengthy debate by pesky elected officials. But the report didn’t stop there: It recommended dramatically restricting the authority of local planning agencies. “State as well as local development reviews,” the commission concluded, “should establish a legal presumption of approval ... if the [local] government did not act within the time established by law, approval would be automatic.”

Where the commission didn’t simply stack the deck in favor of developers, it granted them enormous loopholes. Owners of apartment buildings, for example, would have substantially lower taxes, even if they made a hefty profit; the Kemp report recommends treating “lower income multifamily housing as residential rather than commercial property.” (Not surprisingly, the report is silent on whether to link lower taxes for the owner to lower rent for the tenants.)

The report also devotes an entire chapter to the evils of environmental safeguards, claiming that “Housing affordability is becoming an inadvertent casualty of environmental protection.” Anticipating the anti-environmental backlash of today’s Congress, the report demands wetland regulations be relaxed and that government “modify the [Endangered Species Act] so as to ensure that affordable housing and other important societal needs are given full weight.” The report cites a single, extreme example bor-

rowed from the “Wise Use” movement: the endangered Stephens Kangaroo Rat in Southern California. The region’s development has been hamstrung, in the report’s view, by federal regulations that protect “a system of rat preserves.”

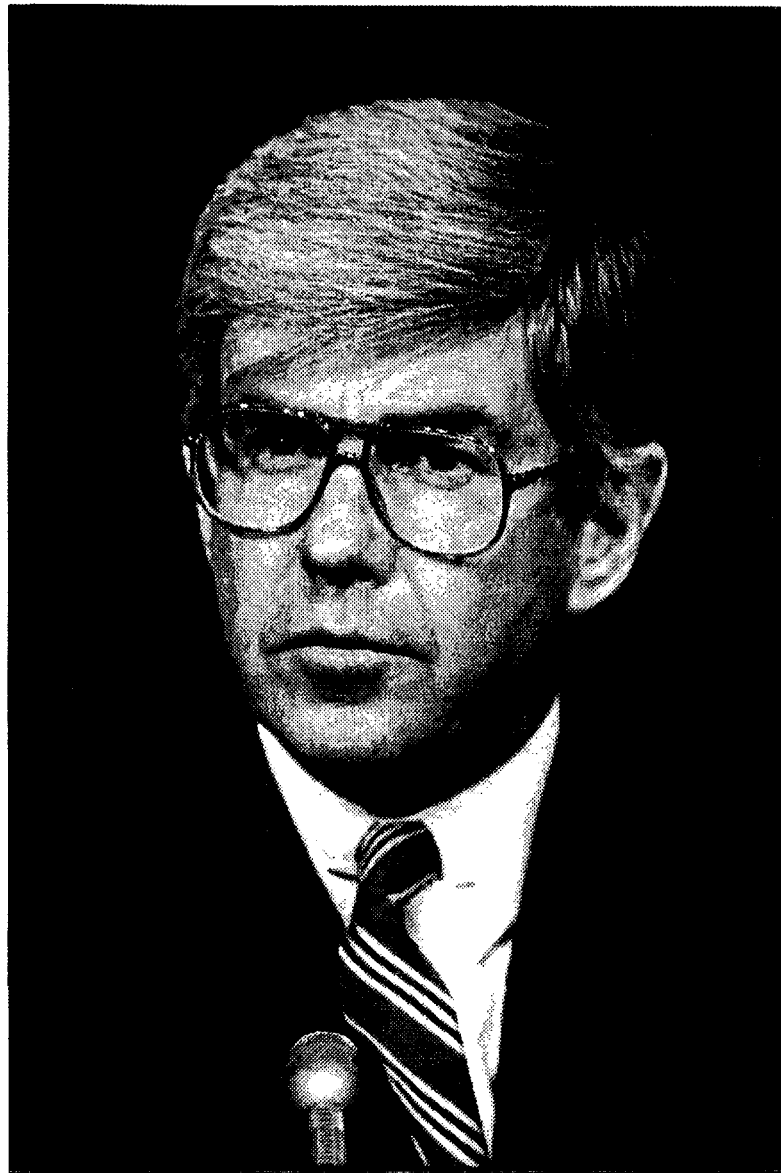
Why rake over the ideological platform of a departed

HUD chairman? For the simple reason that his little-noticed commission report has blossomed into a full-fledged cause. Affordable housing has become a watchword in policy circles, and is particularly popular in crowded states like California, where the pressure of too many people on too few resources has forced regional governments to sharply restrict new construction. And to the enormous frustration and anger of local planners and officials throughout California, developers have friends in state government who revere the NIMBY report like holy writ.

The officials who administer the dictates of the little-known Kemp Commission are a suitably obscure bunch of mid-level state bureaucrats. The administrators for

the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) also have an obscure official mission: to review the “housing element” portion of every city’s general plan, the mandatory development policy every city and county must submit to qualify for federal grants. The housing element defines community housing policies—the number of houses that can be built per acre, the amount of construction allotted to affordable housing and so on. Although HCD has no enforcement powers, the agency’s job is to determine if these housing elements comply with state law.

Despite its apparent lack of regulatory clout, HCD wields



Former HUD Secretary
Jack Kemp

enormous power in the state. The state attorney general's office sent out 47 letters in 1992, warning communities to submit their housing elements to HCD or face a lawsuit. A far greater source of HCD's power is money; the agency controls—either directly or indirectly—tens of millions of federal dollars each year.

When Pete Wilson became governor in 1988, he brought on a new crew of regulators at HCD, and with them came a new view of the agency's role. A year after becoming the agency's director, Timothy Coyle met with the League of California Cities. League representative Ernest Silva remembers Coyle describing his "clients" as being the Building Industry Association and pro-development groups. And he pointedly failed to mention cities or planning agencies among the interests he served.

The Department even sent a pro-construction flyer to planners, developers and builders, which announced that "over-regulation is destroying the American Dream in California." Examples of the "enormous road blocks in the development of desperately needed affordable housing" included growth control, zoning, and fees charged to the developer to pay for added services for the new residents. All these illustrations were taken chapter and verse from the Kemp Commission's NIMBY report—which was hardly surprising, since two agency officials had served on the commission.

Coyle and other HCD officials also went directly to the building industry to show developers how to win project approval by waving the affordable housing banner. Last year, Governor Wilson touted a \$10 million HCD program at the Pacific Coast Builders' Conference. But this program has nothing to do with home construction at all; instead of awarding money to builders, the program gives funds directly to cities that remove obstacles to affordable housing construction. Months later, regional planners finally learned of the program directly from HCD, although doubtless many of them had already heard of it from permit-hungry developers.

To the dismay of planners around the state, HCD started to intervene in local planning disputes on behalf of developers. In several instances, the agency has even used its powers to seize control from local planners and elected officials. In Santa Barbara County, for example, which is divided between its largely urban southern half and a predominately rural section in the north, planners drafted a general plan to control the county's growth. Promised \$5 million in HUD money for much-needed housing in the north, the county only faced one remaining obstacle: The money was tied to the HCD's approval of the housing element, and HCD didn't like the growth-management component of the plan, which sought to contain development in the heavily populated south. Denied HCD certification, the county lost the promised affordable housing funds, even though its program had the highest ranking it could get from HUD reviewers. "We were originally awarded 750 out of 750 points," says Affordable Housing Manager Susan Ruby,

referring to the system federal housing authorities use to evaluate such projects. "But because we didn't have a certified housing element, we went to the bottom of the pile and didn't get any of the money." The county then sued HCD, the state and Coyle. After a costly two-year court battle, the suit was settled out of court this spring.

HCD has also intervened on behalf of individual builders. A developer sued Paso Robles, a rural community in the center of the state, after the City Council rejected his high-impact housing project. Even though the housing project provided no affordable housing, "The developer wrote to HCD," says a city employee, "and we got a letter from HCD expressing [agency officials'] concern about the rejection. They also said that they would be reviewing our housing element closely." This sort of vigilance is entirely in keeping with the agenda outlined by HCD's director. "We come to the aid of developers of all kinds," Coyle says. "We're involved in half a dozen [lawsuits], and we're usually successful."

But none of the many examples shows HCD's bias better than the case of Sebastopol, a small town 60 miles north of San Francisco. More than 150 public meetings over four years had been required to develop the town's new general plan; like the last piece in a complex jigsaw puzzle, certification of the housing element completed the document that would guide the city's future. Unfortunately for Sebastopol, thwarted developers Rich and Nancy Gardner had HCD Director Coyle in their corner.

After the town denied permission to build the subdivision, the Gardners sued. The suit alleged, among other things, that the city did not have a certified housing element. With the general plan in limbo, the Gardners argued, the city had no grounds to turn them down. Sebastopol indeed had no housing element, but it wasn't for lack of trying; four drafts had been submitted to HCD and rejected, the last shortly after HCD officials met privately with the Gardners to discuss Sebastopol's plans. While HCD reviewers never visited Sebastopol, the Department met and corresponded with the Gardners, even providing free legal advice.

Sebastopol officials believe that HCD denied approval to help the Gardners win their lawsuit. Planning Director Richard Spitler argues that, "By withholding certification, HCD made it easier for the Gardners to sue. HCD's single-minded intent was for us to give up local control," he says. "It's appalling that a state agency allows itself to be used like that."

The city won in court last summer, but it has abandoned any hope of obtaining HCD approval. And Sebastopol's City Council also took the precaution of certifying its own housing element, joining a growing list of California cities that have self-certified. Some of these communities have formed consortiums, in order to bypass HCD altogether and apply for funds directly from HUD.

As California cities try to fend off the depredations of the HCD, it is likely that similar battles will become common nationwide. As it becomes harder to win

construction project approval, developers will adapt by playing the affordable-housing card, as they have in California. And if congressional plans to turn more federal authority over to the states in block grants win approval, it will be possible for agencies like HCD to gain even more control. Decisions once made by regional planners will then fall to state agencies that control all funding, and communities will be forced to comply with the state's political agenda.

And if federal housing money gets turned over to states in untargeted block grants, recent history shows that only a fraction will go to those most in need. Congressional investigations into the HUD Community Development Block Grants in the '80s found much of the money going to the usual cast of characters: banks, real estate investors, and well-heeled friends of the powerful. Some money went to questionable projects with little or no connection to housing, such as low-interest loans to a minor-league hockey team in Troy, N.Y. and \$400,000 for the renovation of a carousel in Providence, R.I. A 1992 internal HUD report disclosed that as little as 7 percent of the project's funds actually trickled down to the poor.

A version of Kemp's HOPE program lives on at HUD, although it is dwarfed by HOME, a \$1.4 billion-a-year block-grant program for first-time homebuyers that offers rental assistance, building rehabilitation and other assistance. Generally thought to be less wasteful than other block grant programs, it also has weaknesses. Critics charge

that HOME overlooks more urgent needs such as temporary shelter for the homeless because it gives local jurisdictions have up to five years to spend grant money. In California, where agencies such as HCD are reluctant to unloose any money that might stand in the way of development, this has created a fearsome bottleneck in the flow of federal money. In fiscal year 1992, for example, HOME allocated \$42 million to the state; a mere \$6 million was committed to HOME projects. That sum represents 16 percent of the total, well below the average in most states, which committed 40 to 50 percent of their HOME funds. And as Santa Barbara County's experience shows, winning HUD approval and actually receiving the award can be separate issues, if a state agency such as HCD wants to hold the money for ideological ransom.

Although Kemp has announced that he is not going to run for the GOP nomination, he says he wants to take part in the 1996 political debate through his "Empower America" foundation. Touring the country with former drug czar and self-appointed moral tribune William Bennett, he stumps for familiar Republican causes: school vouchers that will fix our schools, "enterprise zones" that will cure poverty, and, of course, affordable housing that will shelter the poor. To judge by Kemp's legacy in California, the rest of the country should beware of Republicans professing to have rediscovered compassion. ▲

Jeff Elliott is a freelance journalist based in Sebastopol, Calif.

The ITT "T"

DON'T BE LEFT OUT.

Order one today!



FRONT ↑ BACK →



In 2 colors on white heavyweight cotton. Sizes M-L-XL just \$14.95 (Illinois residents pay \$16.25). To order write: ITT T-shirt, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60647. To use MC/VISA, call Claudia at (312) 772-0100, ext. 221.

Have Your Kids Turned Republican? Do You Want To Get Even?

Consider a bequest to In These Times.

When planning your estate, please include a tax-exempt bequest, trust distribution or other long-term support for the Institute for Public Affairs.

For more information, contact:

James Weinstein, Publisher, In These Times
2040 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647
312-772-0100, ext. 223

A GREAT TEACHING TOOL!

And a great deal for teachers! If you teach a course on political science, communications, sociology, history or related subjects, your students can get **IN THESE TIMES** for a fraction of the usual rate. Just call (312) 772-0100, ext. 239, to find out about our college subscription program.

BLEAK HOUSE

Mansions on the hill

E

very year since 1980 the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has produced a thick tome entitled, "Reducing the Deficit: Spending and Revenue Options." Usually, the book—which, among other stirring proposals, has included calls to trim the Small Business Administration's tree planting program—generates little interest beyond the Beltway.

But this year, one proposal has the nation's housing industry up in arms—and twisting arms on Capitol Hill. In the bracing language of the CBO bureaucrat, it's called "eliminate or limit deductions for mortgage interest." The CBO proposal targets the provision in the U.S. tax code that allows homeowners to deduct interest paid on home mortgages from their taxable income. This tax break—known as the mortgage interest deduction—cost the federal government \$51 billion last year in lost revenues.

*How Congress
can reform
America's
"mansion
subsidy."*

By Peter Dreier and
John Atlas

With the GOP in control of Congress and deficit-reduction mania at a peak, proposals to slash the once-sacrosanct mortgage interest deduction are now being hotly debated. At the center of the debate in Congress are two Republican proposals. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Bob Packwood (R-OR) is pressing to limit the deduction to the first \$250,000 of a homeowner's mortgage. (The limit is currently \$1 million.) House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-TX) has proposed a 17 percent flat tax on personal income that would eliminate virtually all tax loopholes, including the mortgage interest deduction. Both proposals would reduce the tax breaks that wealthy homeowners now receive, an undeniably worthy goal. But neither measure would help the millions of American families who cannot afford the American dream of homeownership.

Contrary to public perception, the bulk of federal housing assistance goes to the affluent, not the poor. The current budget of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the agency responsible for helping house the poor, is \$26 billion—half the size of the mortgage deduction. HUD provides subsidies to only 29 percent of the low-income renters eligible for assistance. In contrast, 71 percent of taxpayers with annual incomes of more than \$200,000 get housing assistance through the mortgage interest deduction.

Currently, housing activists are trying to address the skewed structure of housing aid by refocusing the congressional debate over the mortgage interest deduction. On behalf of the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, a public interest advocacy group, Rep. Major Owens (D-NY) has introduced legislation that would reduce the mortgage interest deduction for families with yearly incomes of more than \$75,000 and funnel the savings into a trust fund for low-income housing. Given the clout of the housing industry, such a bill would have been a long shot even when the Democrats controlled Congress. And today's Republican majority has shown even less interest.

For years, the industry has claimed that the mortgage interest deduction is the bedrock of middle-class homeownership. But a review of recent figures from Congress' Joint Taxation Committee shows that 44 percent of last year's \$51 billion homeowner subsidy went to the richest 5 percent of taxpayers—those with incomes of more than \$100,000. Only one-fifth of middle-class taxpayers—the 28 million households with incomes between \$30,000 and \$50,000—received any mortgage subsidy. Even the chief economist of the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB), David F. Seiders, has expressed concern that "questions are being raised about the deduction's cost effectiveness as a tool to broaden homeownership." In a recent article in the NAHB magazine *Builder*, he noted that "frankly, it's possible to find countries with home-

ownership rates comparable to the United States without deductions." Neither Canada nor Australia has a deduction, and their homeownership rates—about two-thirds of all households—is roughly the same as America's.

But there is another approach, one that both housing advocates (fighting drastic cuts in the HUD budget) and the housing industry (fearing attacks on the mortgage interest deduction) could unite behind. Why not scrap the homeowner deduction entirely and institute a homeowner tax credit? This credit would work like the already existing earned income tax credit, which provides a tax refund to low-wage workers, but its benefits would reach into the middle class. The homeowner tax credit would distribute refunds progressively, giving a larger tax break to homeowners with modest incomes and gradually reducing benefits as family income increases. The credit could also be adjusted to reflect regional housing costs, so homeowners in high-priced markets would not be penalized.

Housing advocates often call the current mortgage interest deduction the "mansion subsidy" because it gives the greatest subsidy to taxpayers with the highest incomes and most expensive homes. In contrast, the homeowner tax credit would be available to all homeownership families—including those moderate-income households that do not itemize deductions on their tax returns and so cannot take advantage of the current tax break. And allocating tax credits to homeowners progressively would limit subsidies for the wealthy, while preserving them for the middle class. At the same time, progressive tax credits would add a large number of families who currently do not benefit. Moreover, the tax credit would not add any government bureaucracy.

For the same \$51 billion we now spend on the mortgage interest deduction, a progressive homeowner tax would encourage homeownership far more effectively. The wealthy would continue to buy homes with or without a tax subsidy. But, for millions of working- and middle-class Americans, a homeowner tax credit could mean the difference between renting an apartment and owning a home. And by making it possible for more people to purchase homes, the tax credit would catalyze homebuilding, generate jobs and add to local tax bases.

Of course, reforming homeowner tax policies will be a daunting task. For years, the mortgage interest deduction has been sustained by the enormous political muscle of America's builders, bankers and real estate agents. In fact,

the housing industry contributes more to Congress than does any other business sector. Now, with the Packwood and Arney plans on the table, the housing industry has redoubled its efforts to preserve the current deduction, insisting that any change in it would wreak havoc with the real estate market and the economy at large. In March, a group of housing industry trade groups issued a 47-page report examining possible changes in the mortgage interest deduction. Citing this report, Mortgage Bankers Association President Joe Pickett told Congress last month that tampering with the deduction would be "harmful to the nation's economy and to efforts to spur homeownership. The indirect efforts of lowering the cap could hamper business activity, slow employment growth, and greatly reduce state and local government revenues."

But, in fact, the housing industry study refutes Pickett's

argument. It provides no evidence that Packwood-style legislation would have such disastrous consequences. The report offers two examples of the impact of a \$300,000 cap on housing prices. It first looks at its effect on the owner of a \$625,000 home with a \$500,000 mortgage and estimates that the value of the house would drop by as much as 12.2 percent. Next, it estimates that an owner with a \$1.25 million house and a \$1 million mortgage would see his home's value decline by as much as 16.6 to 21.3 percent. This homeowner would see the value of his tax break fall from \$380,000 to \$103,738. It's hard to imagine the general public feeling sorry for a

millionaire who finds his mansion subsidy reduced to a mere \$103,738. In fact, a recent *Time*-CNN poll found that 68 percent of respondents support Packwood-style reform. There was almost no variation among Democrat, Republican and independent respondents.

Almost everyone supports the idea of homeownership—it's a fundamental part of this nation's promise of prosperity. And no one wants to eliminate housing subsidies for middle-class families. But the current system—which subsidizes the rich to purchase huge homes without helping hard-working families to buy a small bungalow—is in desperate need of reform.

As a nation, we have the resources to assist the millions of poor and working-class families who cannot afford market-rate rents or home prices. It's time to stop subsidizing mansions. A progressive tax credit is the best way to help hard-working families achieve the dream of homeownership. ◀ Peter Dreier is professor of public policy at Occidental College and a board member of the National Housing Institute (NHI), an Orange, N.J.-based think tank. John Atlas is president of NHI.



© 1995 TERRY LABAN

B L A C K A M E R I C A

Common ground

***Former
NAACP head
Ben Chavis
feels the
pull of an
increasingly
popular black
nationalism.***

By Salim Muwakkil

In February 1994, I gained access to a list of radical black intellectuals and activists who were invited to a secret meeting to be held the next month in Detroit. The list was noteworthy enough for its discerning selection of influential black theorists: The dozens of names on the list ranged the ideological continuum, from well-known Marxists like Manning Marable and cultural nationalists like Maulana Karenga, the creator and popularizer of the Kwanzaa holiday, to lesser known luminaries like Brooklyn's Jitu Weusi and Chicago's Anderson Thompson. Louis Farrakhan's name was penciled in.

But what was truly astonishing was that these select radicals were being summoned by the NAACP. Rev. Benjamin Chavis Jr.,

nearing the end of his first year as the NAACP's executive director, was apparently fulfilling his promise to steer the nation's oldest civil-rights organization away from business as usual.

As it turned out, of course, Chavis ran into institutional road blocks; his vision did not conform to the desires of the group's traditionalist board. Although they made no attempts to stop the Detroit meeting, several board members were alarmed by Chavis' sudden deviation from NAACP centrism. The rift that antagonism created, coupled with charges of sexual and financial misconduct, led to Chavis' ouster from the organization in August, 1994. Before he left, however, he organized the first National African American Leadership Summit (NAALS) in June 1994. With the institutional credibility added by the NAACP's imprimatur, the meeting attracted more than 200 representatives of black groups from across the country—and from across the political spectrum.

Last month in Houston, Chavis convened the fourth NAALS conference, but fewer than half the original organizations sent representatives. Nonetheless, Chavis says he feels better about the latest gathering. "The Houston summit marked the first anniversary of the NAALS," he says. "But more than that, it is the first meeting in which our group has an official identity as a separate entity." Following his exit from the NAACP, Chavis has been steadily gathering building blocks for a new organization designed to address contemporary black issues more directly and effectively. "Grassroots brothers and sisters are looking for something that relates to them," he argues. "They haven't been touched by these other organizations out here."

Chavis is right about the deep grassroots alienation among African-Americans. Recent studies have revealed high levels of political apathy and distrust of leadership among lower-income blacks. Chavis regards Farrakhan's "Million Man March" on Washington as an opportunity to rally that disaffected constituency. Because the march, scheduled for Oct. 16, 1995, has since become a major NAALS focus, many critics complain that the Nation of Islam exercises too much influence on the fledgling group. Chavis' gestures of support for Farrakhan "are not sufficiently balanced with a critique of the contradictions inherent in conservative black nationalism," writes Manning Marable in his syndicated column, "Along The Color Line."

Like many black theorists, Marable concedes the good works of Farrakhan's NOI. The group's record of social and personal rehabilitation is unmatched within the African-American community, and its critique of white supremacy adds a valuable framework from which to understand black

America's peculiar plight. But the NOI also upholds a doctrine of eugenic theology that identifies white people as Satan's seed and blacks as God's people. What's more, the NOI's political ideology, *sans* racial grievances, is virtually identical to that of the Christian Coalition: anti-abortion, anti-divorce, anti-gay, anti-feminist and so forth.

Fears of excessive NOI influence will hardly be allayed by the NAALS' recent Houston meeting. While the official purpose of the meeting was to craft the organization's constitution and establish its institutional structure, Farrakhan's Million Man March was placed at the top of the NAALS agenda. The march is important, NAALS members say, because it aptly symbolizes the purpose of the new group. "It alerts the wider American community that we won't just sit around while right-wing Republicans attempt to erase the hard work of the civil rights movement and those black freedom fighters who preceded us," explains Conrad Worrill, chair of the National Black United Front and a founding NAALS member.

The NAALS has adopted a difficult inside/outside strategy. While remaining fully rooted in the civil-rights tradition of aggressive social protest and demands for inclusion, the group is also stressing ideas of self-reliance and economic development typically espoused by black nationalists. Chavis is explicitly attempting to merge two distinct and traditionally antagonistic strands of the African-American freedom movement—the integrationist (civil-rights) strand and the separatist (black nationalist) strand—into one organization.

The strain of that merger proved too much for the NAACP, Chavis' supporters argue, largely because of its dependence on white philanthropy. It is not surprising, they say, that groups associated with Jewish concerns would balk at contributing money to an organization friendly to Farrakhan. The new group, on the other hand, depends entirely on funding sources from within the African-American community. "Never again will we allow forces outside our community to dictate to us," is one of the NAALS' founding principles.

Accordingly, Chavis notes, the NAALS is not much concerned about charges of undue NOI influence. "We are a group organized specifically for the purpose of promoting and establishing operational unity within the African-American community, as well as promoting unity among African people throughout the world," he says. Now based in Washington, D.C., the group represents a wide range of black organizations. Its mission statement targets the issues of "economic development, youth and community empowerment, moral and spiritual renewal, health and environment and communications."

Many of these issues are direct outgrowths of Chavis' political history. The 47-year-old North Carolina native was executive director of the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ for eight years before he was named to head the NAACP. During this period he pioneered the fight against "environmental racism" and gained

a reputation as a creative and resourceful leader in the civil-rights mold. Those who tapped Chavis for NAACP leadership were won over by his argument that a stay-the-course policy offered no answers to black America's escalating problems of violence, drugs and community dissolution.

Chavis' dream of operational unity has long exerted a powerful appeal among African-American organizers. The Negro Convention movement and the National Negro Congress of the early 20th century labored valiantly, but in vain, to attract those devoted to the enterprising ideas of Booker T. Washington and those drawn to the political sophistication of Washington's rival, W.E.B. DuBois. The National Black Political Conventions held in Gary, Indiana in 1972 and Little Rock, Ark. in 1974 joined black elected officials, black nationalists, Marxists and community organizers to encourage cooperative action. Unfortunately, the slogan of the gatherings, "Black unity without uniformity," was all but discarded when the conventions ended.

Despite Chavis' intention to steer a course between ideological extremes, his group has acquired, perhaps unavoidably in these tribal times, a distinctly nationalist flavor. For now, Marable's warning about flirting with conservative black nationalism is one Chavis seems willing to ignore. Marable criticizes Chavis for failing "to reach out sufficiently to liberal-left, progressive leadership in the black community," likely referring to those black intellectuals who, like himself, labor in academia while concentrating on the problems of black America. Many of these intellectuals are gaining public celebrity, but they are also being criticized for their lack of community connection. (See "The Public Mind," *ITT*, May 15.) Where, for example, are the black feminist voices that could mediate some of the patriarchal assumptions of the Million Man March?

Chavis demurs on the question of the apparent rootlessness of many black intellectuals. He singles out Cornel West's presence at NAALS conferences as a hopeful sign and notes that most black progressives have declined the invitations to participate.

The move toward nationalism is something organic to the black community; it's not a contrived movement. Poll after poll has indicated that African-Americans are much less concerned with issues of integration than with notions of indigenous economic development and moral reformation. Chavis is simply responding to the spirit of the times by attempting to build an organization that will effectively speak to that spirit. And his embrace of Farrakhan is not based solely on brotherly benevolence: The NOI leader's enormous grassroots popularity among blacks offers Chavis and the NAALS the possibility of a considerable "coat-tail effect."

To solidify the connection between Chavis' group and Farrakhan's march, the NAALS plans to meet again the weekend before the scheduled Oct. 16 event. The former NAACP chief risks much by identifying so openly with the NOI, but it's a risk he's willing to take. And, thanks to the conservative mood of the country, it's a risk that's been well rewarded. ◀

I N T H E A R T S

Affirmative action hero

W

ith his newest film, *The Glass Shield*, writer-director Charles Burnett continues to defy definition. If you see the trailer for this movie, you might think it's a low-budget *Lethal Weapon*, since it features a salt-and-pepper cop team (black Michael Boatman and white Lori Petty). Or perhaps a police thriller with an affirmative action accent, since it's about an African-American officer in a white sheriff's department who finds bad guys both on the street and working beside him.

But this is a cop movie with a difference—it's more poetry than police procedural, and it lacks good guys in the usual sense. Burnett's last movie, *To Sleep with Anger*, was among the freshest and most subtly nuanced portraits of family and neighborhood folkways in recent

black cinema. The reputation of that urban fable has grown since it sank commercially in 1990, a fate that I hope does not await *The Glass Shield*. Everything about this movie is a surprise, from the comic-book titles sequence that illustrates a young black man's dream of being a cop, to its ironic final shot of him, in tears, sobbing good-bye to that dream forever.

The young man in question is J.J. Johnson (Boatman) and he is that rare African-American movie character with not only a dream but a dream life. And therein lies the marvel of *The Glass Shield*. Though Burnett has drawn its plot from real life, he has transformed the headlines into something more than docudrama.

The inspiration for J.J. was John Eddie Johnson, a black cop who assisted in a corruption investigation of his own mostly white sheriff's department in California in 1980—and who became, in the end, one of the investigation's only victims. Burnett mixes the facts of the Johnson case with references to Rodney King, and to several recent cases in which white murderers

blamed their crimes on imaginary black perpetrators.

Burnett's J.J. is a likable but not particularly clever guy, who imagines himself part of a thin blue line between good and evil, the hero of a gold-badge fantasy. "Lucky you, you're going to make history," he's told when he goes straight from the Academy into an all-white Los Angeles Sheriff's station. There he is met with wariness and indifference, but also camaraderie, once the guys impress on him their code: "You're one of us, J.J.; you're not a brother."

Desperate to be one of the guys and eager to believe they've got the right man, J.J. colludes in the framing of a black suspect named Teddy (another solid performance from rapper Ice Cube) for the murder of a white woman. J.J. agrees to back up his white partner, offering perjured testimony claiming that Teddy was stopped for a traffic violation and not, as was actually the case, because he fit a racial profile.

Only when J.J. is slapped in the face with unmistakable signs of major tampering with evidence does he decide to expose his partner and his superiors. Overcoming his own suspicions, he forms an uneasy alliance with Deborah (Petty), the only woman officer in the station; together, the two put their jobs—and even possibly their lives—on the line. For the white boys, J. J. and Deborah are an affirmative-action nightmare come true—a black man and a white woman teamed up against the guys in an attempt to destroy the department and its racist ways. But, in the probe that follows, J.J.'s relatively minor perjury proves his undoing; the more serious evildoers cut a deal with the prosecutors.

Burnett is not overly concerned with the melodrama of

**The Glass
Shield is a cop
movie with a
difference—its
hero has an
interior life.**

By Pat Dowell

muckraking, even when the exposure of graft and racism becomes a major engine of the story. *The Glass Shield* is, rather, a character study, and one as complex as anything Hollywood has produced this year. J.J.'s quest for identity is its heart, and Burnett takes a subjective, even meditative, view of his struggle.

The movie is shot in the brash primary hues and dramatic angles of comic books, its deeply shadowed interiors alternating with the pitiless glare of California streets. An inside/outside schism is built into the very structure of *The Glass Shield*. The movie unfolds from J.J.'s subjective, blinkered view of his world. It's a disarming, almost disorienting implosion of movie conventions. J.J.'s isolation is emphasized in shots of the station that always seem to find him coming around a corner as a conversation breaks up, or daydreaming alone at his desk. As the story proceeds, and J.J. begins to resist and expose the deceit and graft he witnesses, his isolation takes on a more ominous tone.

Michael Boatman played the pensive morgue attendant dressing the fatalities of Vietnam in TV's *China Beach*, and he projects the same otherworldly curiosity in his performance as J.J., tinged with a vaguely paranoid desperation. Petty, with her angular face and knife-edge eyes, provides the perfect complement to Boatman's soft and mercurial openness.

Burnett also manages to draw subtle and strangely wonderful performances from a raft of Central Casting stalwarts, including M. Emmet Walsh, Michael Ironside, Linden Chiles, and, most notably, Richard Anderson, the Six-Million-Dollar Man's old supervisor. As Chief Massey, Anderson exudes a certain weary corruption, grandly lamenting the lack of people "who fit in," riding J.J. for spelling errors in his reports, misting up over a gift from his men. He's a complex and even at times a sympathetic figure, hardly a cartoon villain.

Indeed, nobody in *The Glass Shield* fits into the simple, boring rules that govern the typical police drama. J.J. himself can be monumentally insensitive, especially when it comes to his patient girlfriend Barbara. At a family dinner, when his mother chides him to marry her before she gets tired of waiting, J.J. smugly replies, "Barbara isn't going anywhere." Burnett frames the scene with Barbara facing the camera, the others behind her, so that only we see the pain register in her face.

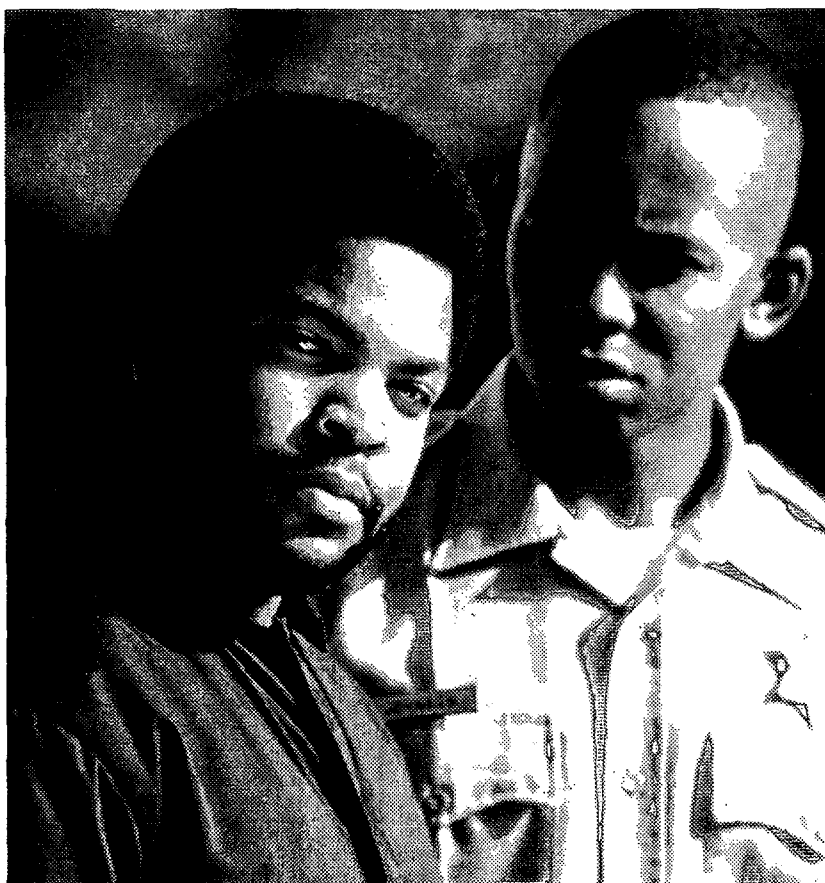
That Burnett can find the hurtfulness in his protagonist

and the oddly sympathetic moments in his villains is a major part of what makes *The Glass Shield* so unlike the kind of "entertainment" we expect to see in a movie theater. That's why Burnett seems a conundrum to Hollywood—and, unfortunately, to audiences (black and white) weaned on *Die Hard* or the carefully programmed "eccentricities" of *Forrest Gump*.

Some have suggested that the distributors of *To Sleep with Anger* botched its release, booking it as an arthouse film and losing that elusive

"black audience" that might have flocked to the movie had it been more widely advertised. Perhaps. *The Glass Shield* is not exactly a "mainstream" film, either, but Miramax, the Disney subsidiary that scored so big with *Pulp Fiction*, is releasing *The Glass Shield* in a few hundred theaters this summer.

It's still not clear, though, that American audiences are quite ready for Charles Burnett. Ultimately, the psychological whodunit inside J.J.'s head in *The Glass Shield* is about the good guys and the bad guys in each one of us, but even more so about the special duality inside the outsider. It reminds me of what W.E.B. Du Bois called in 1903 the black man's "double self." J.J. is still, 92 years after Du Bois wrote these words, engaged in the strife that Du Bois asserted is the history of his race in America—"this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self."



The Glass Shield
Directed by Charles Burnett

I N P R I N T

Worked over

By James Weinstein

Here's how it used to work: Every few years there'd be a recession, business would fall off, companies would lose money, and workers would get laid off. Then a recovery; business would pick up, companies would again become profitable, people would be called back to work, and new workers would be hired.

But something seemed to go haywire in the last recession. The first part of the pattern held true to form. Losses were large: The combined losses of the big three auto companies alone amounted to \$7.5 billion. And, overall, millions of workers were laid off. But as the economy began to rebound, the "recovery" phase changed dramatically. Profits have soared—Chrysler alone accumulated a record \$7.5 billion in profits last year. But workers have not been called back to work. Even last year, as business continued to expand and profits in general jumped 30 percent, just about every major manufacturer continued to cut its workforce. As the *New York Times* recently reported, "even dynamic companies that have never lost a dime are taking drastic steps to streamline operations."

Why are the fortunes of workers declining as business improves? According to social critic Jeremy Rifkin, we are witnessing the birth pangs of a radically different era in economic history: the eclipse of work as we know it. As Rifkin argues in his latest book, *The End of Work*, it's a change that's been in the making for a long time. "While earlier industrial technologies replaced the physical power of human labor, substituting machines for body and brawn," he writes, "new computer-based technologies promise a replacement of the human mind itself, substituting thinking machines for human beings across the whole gamut of economic activity." Automated machinery, robots and increasingly sophisticated computers can already do most of the repetitive tasks that now employ 75 percent of the labor force in most industrial nations, Rifkin tells us. As a result, he writes, more than 90 million of the 124 million existing jobs in the United States are vulnerable to eventual replace-

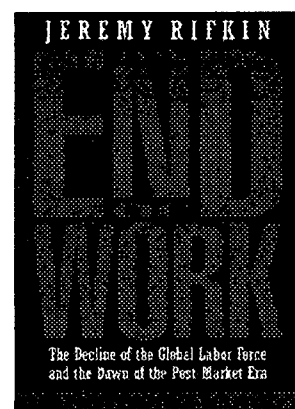
ment by machines.

Indeed, economists are already forecasting that the next recession will bring another, deeper round of downsizing in the workforce. With computerization so drastically increasing worker productivity, many corporations will remain profitable even as the market shrinks and they produce and sell a lot less. Some companies even see the next recession as a time of opportunity. Consider Sun Microsystems, the leading manufacturer of powerful workstation computers. Because of cutbacks in its workforce, the amount of money each worker makes for Sun each year went from \$90,000 in 1989 to \$403,000 in 1994. This, of course, has reduced Sun's operating costs enormously. Now, its executives believe, a weak market will further increase its advantage over companies that rely more heavily on human labor to do their work.

The Sun experience—repeated across a broad range of companies, from heavy equipment makers like Caterpillar to computer firms like IBM—reflects another important shift in how technological innovation affects the job market. In the 19th century, as American industry enjoyed its early explosive growth, new investment in technology often meant fewer jobs in a given company, but it also meant more jobs in the economy as a whole. The expansion of new markets kept pace with technological change, and new technologies created new industries. But now that process is grinding to a halt. The acceleration of technological change over the last 35 years has far outstripped job growth: The total output of manufactured goods rose steadily from 1960 to 1990, but the number of workers needed to produce those goods fell by 50 percent.

All this means that in order to stay in business, competing companies will have to shed employees and acquire computerized equipment as rapidly as Sun has done. And soon, manufacturing workers will be as rare as California condors or Everglades panthers.

Rifkin examines the indicators of the "transition to a near-workerless society" in some detail, and in industry after industry. Starting with agriculture, he reminds us that the process began in this country more than a century ago. In 1880, half the workforce was employed in agriculture; now only 2.7 percent of the gainfully employed work on the land. Until recently, most of this change had been accomplished mechanically, for example with the introduction of the mechan-



The End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era
By Jeremy Rifkin
G. P. Putnam's Sons
350 pp., \$24.95

ical cotton picker, which, when it was introduced in 1944, displaced thousands upon thousands of Southern black farmworkers and pushed them North in search of work.

Similarly, in manufacturing, much of the reduction in working time has come about through improved machinery and rationalized work procedures. In the '20s, rapid productivity increases led to the first round of chronic layoffs and declining sales. The attempt to stimulate sluggish consumer demand helped create a new consumer society. As a result, job growth boomed in what came to be called the service sector. Fields like advertising and public relations gained millions of new jobs, which helped make up for losses in the industrial sector. Americans began to shift, as Rifkin remarks, "from a psychology of thrift to one of spendthrift."

For the next 40 years, employment in the service sector continued to expand as it shrank in manufacturing. Now, however, the new information technologies are displacing jobs in the service sector as well. Marshalling evidence from the *Wall Street Journal*, Rifkin concludes that "Much of the huge U.S. service sector seems on the verge of an upheaval similar to that which hit farming and manufacturing" in earlier years. Office workers, bank clerks, wholesale and retail employees, and even educators and commercial artists are being displaced by computers at an ever-increasing rate.

Rifkin notes that the social costs of these changes have been heavy. In a chapter entitled "Winners and Losers," he writes about men and women who a few short years ago were taking home \$30,000 a year and who now are lucky to find jobs as janitors or security guards for \$5 an hour. And he asserts that this experience has led to increasing alcoholism, drug abuse and crime.

Such social ills have, of course, been long familiar in the nation's inner cities, home to many of the African-American workers who were the first casualties of deindustrialization. Because of their late displacement from the land and the country's long history of racism, African-Americans have been mercilessly conscripted into the vanguard of the workless economy. As early as 1970, Sidney Willhelm, in his book *Who Needs the Negro?*, had forecast a "vastly different system of race relations" under "the dawn of a new technological era." Willhelm warned that the struggle for racial justice would ignore the bellwethers of that era at its own peril: "An underestimation of the technological revolu-

tion can only lead to an underestimation of the concomitant racial revolution from exploitation to uselessness." Echoing Willhelm, Rifkin argues that many black Americans are becoming trapped in a permanent underclass: "the commodity value of their labor has been rendered virtually useless by the automated technologies that have come to displace them in the new high-tech global economy."

Now, however, the specter of uselessness—and the devastating social dislocations that accompany it—is no longer confined to the black community. The symptoms of deindustrialization have spread to the economic main-

stream. To take just one instance, consider the tremendous boom in temporary employment, which has rendered jobs in the service sector more precarious than ever. Between 1982 and 1990, temporary employment grew 10 times faster than overall employment. In 1992, two out of three new private-sector jobs were part-time. Temporary agencies like Manpower—now the country's largest private employer—supply American industry with 1.5 million workers a day. More than 25 percent of working Americans are employed part-time, and these workers are almost always paid less than full-time employees. With no job security, no health insurance, no vacation pay and no other benefits, one in six Americans now lives below the poverty line, Rifkin observes, and millions more are threatened with losing jobs that pay a living wage.

This new job instability, not surprisingly, has ratcheted up the politics of racial resentment. As a new generation of Americans abandons the dream of upward mobility in the face of pervasive downward mobility, the mood of the nation has shifted from one of relative generosity toward the disadvantaged to the bitter disavowal of programs that promote equality. Thus we have the phenomenon of the "angry white male" and what the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* calls the "revenge of the anti-affirmative action baby boomers," as shrinking economic opportunity has fueled the campaign to overturn affirmative action laws in 16 states. And we have increasing numbers of marginalized white Americans who are receptive to racist, ultra-nationalist and conspiratorial ideas.

Of course, there are also some "winners" in our new high-tech economy, but they constitute a small, relatively well-educated, minority of the workforce. And these beneficiaries of the high-tech economy make up far less than half



ILLUSTRATIONS © KIT BOYCE 1995

of the “two different Americas” that Rifkin tells us are shaping up as we make the turn into the 21st century. Like the “angry white males,” the new economic elite has retreated from any sense of responsibility to the other America—in this case, by succumbing to a cosmopolitan social indifference. Hence their quite literal retreat into walled suburban communities, with elaborate infrastructures of private security personnel, private schools, even private garbage collectors.

As we approach this “new period in history where machines will increasingly replace human labor in the production of goods and services,” the benefits are flowing only to corporate owners, top managers and a decreasing number of highly skilled engineers, technicians and professionals. With the liberating potential of today’s technological changes limited to a small elite, Rifkin warns, these developments can only lead to economic disaster and the demise of democratic society. Unless there is a basic reorientation of our society, he argues, increasing numbers of the unemployed “will find themselves sinking inexorably into the permanent underclass.” Many will turn to the informal economy to survive: Some will resort to barter, others to theft and petty crime, still others to drug-dealing and prostitution. “Millions of able-bodied human beings, stranded by a society that no longer needs or wants their labor” will be ignored, as governments “shift spending priorities from welfare and job creation to beefed-up police security and the building of more prisons.” It’s worth noting that at least part of Rifkin’s prophecy is coming to pass in California, where the budget for prison construction is projected to grow at twice the rate of state spending on education.

Yet it need not be this way. Grim as this picture is within the confines of our current market-oriented system, the computerization of work also contains the potential for “an answer to humanity’s age-old dream of a life free of toil and hardship.” But this can only happen, Rifkin says, if “weaning the body politic away from a strictly market-centered orientation becomes the pressing task of every nation on earth.”

So far, so good. But when Rifkin speculates about “Life Beyond the Marketplace,” he wanders onto shaky ground. He sees as our savior “a third sector in American life that has been of historical significance in the making of the nation, and that now offers the distinct possibility of helping

reshape the social contract in the 21st century.” This third sector, it turns out, is “also known as the independent or volunteer sector,” one in which “fiduciary arrangements give way to community bonds, and where the giving of one’s time to others takes the place of artificially imposed market relationships based on selling oneself and one’s services to others.”

His third sector, however, is made up of a mishmash of organizations and activities, which pose no serious challenge to the rule of the marketplace—let alone to the corporations that lord over the market economy. For example, Rifkin applauds the recent extraordinary growth of tax-exempt

foundations; the combined assets of these nonprofits now amount to \$500 billion. Yet most of these foundations—and especially the larger ones, such as Ford, Rockefeller, Mellon and Olin—largely underwrite the political and ideological agendas of corporate capitalism. Only a handful of the nation’s 45,000 tax-exempt organizations could even be remotely considered to have a “post-market” orientation.

Rifkin does decry the “more than \$104 billion in subsidies” via direct payments and tax breaks that transnational corporations soaked up in 1993. And he suggests that defense spending could be cut. In addition, he offers some “modest proposals” to ease the immediate pain of the unemployed and underemployed. Along with many other economists and social critics, he calls for a shorter work week, so that available work might be distributed more equitably.

And he revives the call for a “social wage,” the 1963 proposal for a universal subsistence income advanced by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution, the left-liberal group convened by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, Calif. Rifkin adds that such a wage should be tied to a wide range of community services to be performed by the recipients.

But as he himself comments, “cuts in defense, the elimination of unnecessary subsidies to transnational companies, and the paring down of the welfare bureaucracy, while essential,” would not be enough to provide income for millions of displaced workers or to “rebuild the third sector of American society.”

We might well wonder, however, whether the third sector—such as it is—can bear the kind of weight necessary to counter the market forces that are pushing workers into obsolescence. In particular, Rifkin neglects a central insight:



Everywhere the third sector exists in capitalist democracies, it has grown up hand in hand with the market economy. In particular, Rifkin's use of Alexis de Tocqueville's writings about "America's voluntary spirit" as if it were something outside the marketplace proves quite misleading. Tocqueville, after visiting America from his native France, wrote that nothing, in his view, "deserve[d] more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America." These informal networks of "voluntary associations" were, he argued, the lifeblood of democracy. In democratic countries "knowledge of how to combine is the mother of all other forms of knowledge; on its progress depends that of all others."

Tocqueville, of course, was talking about the civil society that is now a normal part of every capitalist democracy. To a European accustomed to the sharply delineated class stratification of traditional France and other monarchies, the freedom and mobility of the United States, and the absence of a feudal tradition, were indeed novel. And the relative absence of rigid class lines was also a major reason for the dynamism of 19th-century America. But as democracy developed in Europe and feudal class divisions began to dissolve, civil society also flourished in Europe.

Now, however, the civil societies that were once nourished by most Western democracies are in crisis—largely because market forces have steadily eroded the elementary bonds of family, neighborhood and community that sustain civil society. To imply, as Rifkin does, that the "third sector" can overcome the market is to gloss over the damage it has suffered at the market's hands.

Rifkin's confusion about this phenomenon leads him into another misunderstanding. "In the wake of the collapse of the Communist Party in Central and Eastern Europe," he writes, "the third sector has become the wellspring for new ideas and reforms as well as political leadership." But while his enthusiasm for this new development in the former Communist countries is admirable, this development, too, has little to do with a third sector outside the marketplace. Rather, what we are seeing in the former Communist countries—where, much as in feudal society, all independent forms of social and political activity were suppressed by the state—is simply the beginnings of a civil society independent of the state, similar to those in other capitalist countries. And as in those other nations, the civil society of the former

Soviet bloc is very much market-oriented.

The fuzziness of Rifkin's third sector also allows him to recruit Ronald Reagan and George Bush (he of the infamous "thousand points of light") into this allegedly post-market movement. "From his first day in office," Rifkin writes, "President Reagan made volunteerism a key theme of his administration, suggesting that government had taken over many of the tasks previously performed by the third sector." And George Bush is credited with reminding the country that "the volunteer sector was the ... backbone of the American democratic spirit," a comment patently false, but entirely apropos of someone like Bush, who was raised to have a strong sense of *noblesse oblige*.

Notwithstanding Rifkin's incomplete understanding of the nature and precarious standing of civil society, there remains some value in envisioning a society of work based on social need and on the principle of the full and free development of every human being. Beyond commodity production, there is a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done for the benefit of society.

Rifkin has surprisingly little to say about what work will look like once it moves beyond the marketplace. This, however, is crucial in developing a vision of a new society worth fighting for. In a society that offers genuine equality of opportunity, for example, education would become a lifelong activity; many more teachers would be needed in every community and at all levels of instruction. Similarly, health care, should it ever be disentangled from the mar-

ket, would employ many times more people than it does now. Cultural activities would also require facilities in every community, as well as a workforce of artists, musicians and actors on a scale hardly imaginable now. And so on.

Of course, to explore this territory fully would take a separate book. But it is fair for Rifkin's readers to expect at least to be pointed in this direction. To get beyond work as we know it will require full public discussion of the new possibilities for humane, socially useful work that can emerge out of the dying regime of market-driven work. In practical terms, this means that instead of clinging to the hope that a "third sector" will spontaneously grow out of our beleaguered civil society, we need a political movement that can free these possibilities from the economic and ideological restrictions placed on them by corporate capitalism. For all its limitations, Rifkin's pathbreaking book can help that desperately needed political work to begin. ◀



The raw and the Cook

By Joel Robbins

The academy has lately been so obsessed with the politics of cultural difference that it is impossible for two cultures to meet anymore without someone suspecting that something nasty is going on. The current vogue for studies of colonialism and its post- and neo- variants has made everyone sensitive to the often horrible outcomes of such encounters: conquest, cultural marginalization, economic expropriation and worse. And it was only a matter of time before this acute sensitivity came to trouble the discipline of anthropology.

Anthropologists, after all, pioneered the comparative study of cultures, and it has long fallen to them to point out the positive aspects of culture in general, and to make it look like other, non-Western cultures were getting along pretty well, considering all they had been through. Now that well-meaning posture of innocence has provoked a backlash of sorts, and Marshall Sahlins, a cultural anthropologist at the University of Chicago and one of the discipline's most distinguished scholars, finds himself engaged in a fierce debate in his new book, *How "Natives" Think*. The subject of the book is a seemingly obscure in-house tussle over the interpretation of Captain James Cook's sojourn on the island of Hawai'i in 1779. But it has opened up onto questions that go to the heart of anthropological study: How much do other cultures really differ from our own? And why is anthropology worth doing at all?

Somewhat astonishingly, this debate has provoked a good deal of interest outside of anthropology. *How "Natives" Think* has already been discussed on National Public Radio, reported about in the popular academic magazine *Linguafranca*, and reviewed in the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice Literary Supplement*. Why is it that this particular tempest has so violently overflowed the anthropological teacup?

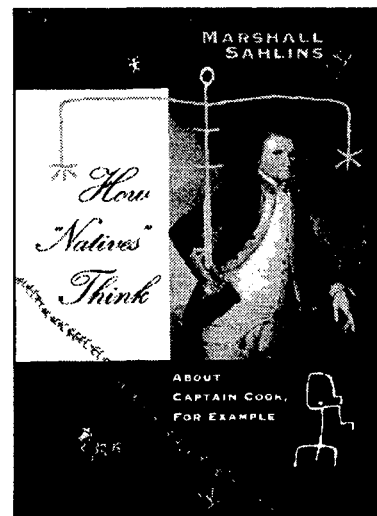
To understand the force of Sahlins' book, it helps to first step back and consider the recent fortunes of anthropology

within the academy. Many anthropologists have found the rise of the openly political fields of multiculturalism and cultural studies singularly unnerving. In the late 1970s, ground now covered under the rubric of cultural studies was largely the exclusive province of anthropology. Now that cross- and multi-cultural scholarship is becoming common currency, however, anthropologists, onetime rising stars in the interdisciplinary firmament, are beginning to look like they could become also-rans.

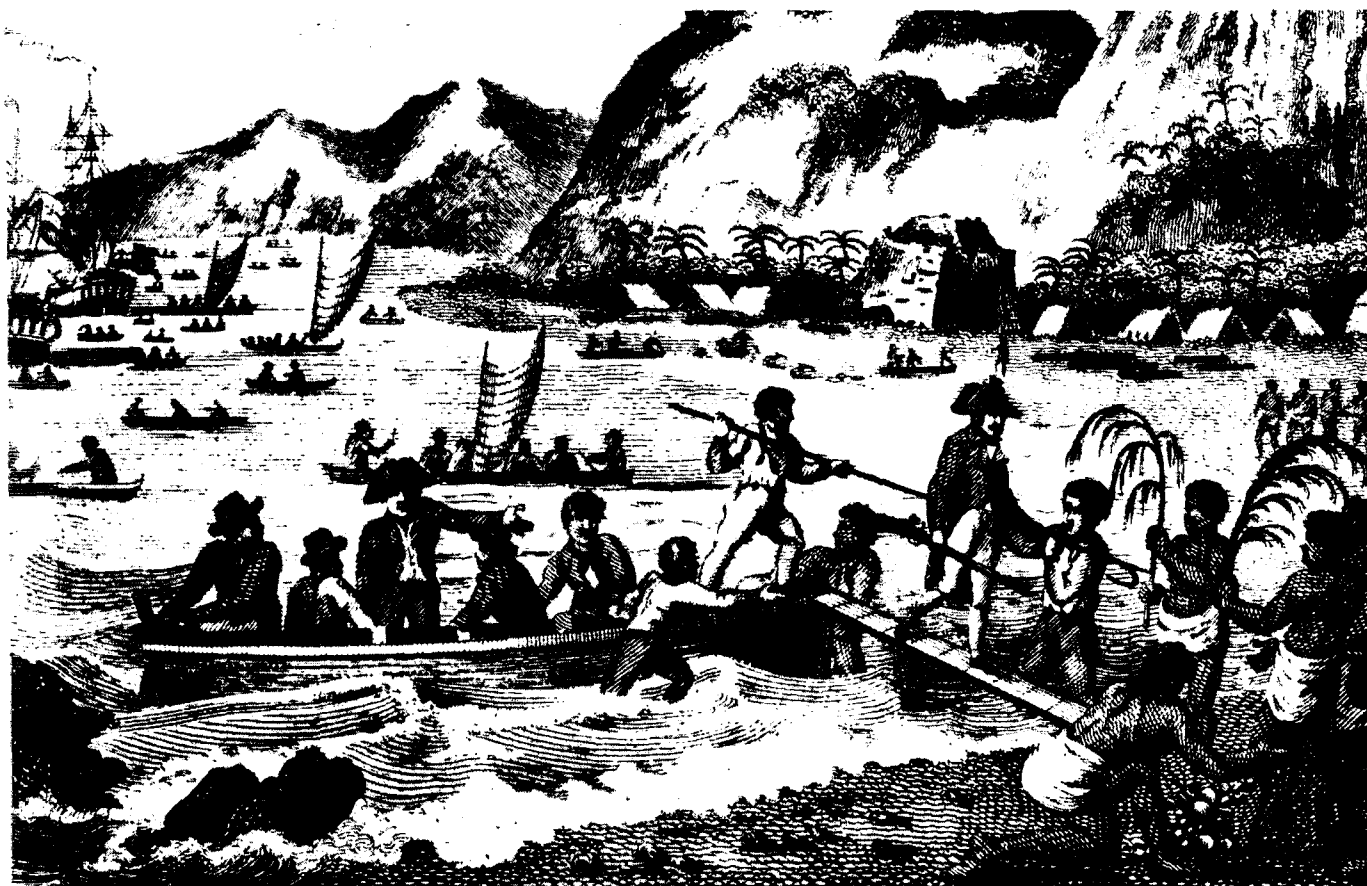
Some anthropologists, however, have greeted the new order more warmly. For them, the emergent, more politicized cultural disciplines have provided an arena for trying out new arguments, and for giving expression to aspects of their thought that had no place under the old anthropological regime. This is where Sahlins' adversary, Gananath Obeyesekere, comes in. A senior anthropologist at Princeton, Obeyesekere was previously best known for his work on Sri Lanka and on the psychoanalytic study of culture. But in Sahlins' earlier work on Cook, Obeyesekere discovered what appeared to be a promising target for his newfound voice in the current debates over the politics of cultural difference.

Since the late 1970s, Sahlins has been trying to fashion a version of structuralist theory that can elucidate processes of historical change. Structuralism, because of its fundamental focus on the relations between elements of a culture at single points of time, was long thought to be useless in the study of social change. Arguing against this received wisdom, Sahlins has maintained that the structures of culture influence and are influenced by the course of history. The events surrounding Captain Cook's stay and eventual murder on the island of Hawai'i have in several publications furnished Sahlins with a valuable case study in how the matrices of cultural meaning can organize historical contingency. The long-accepted "fact" that the Hawaiians understood Cook as a manifestation of their fertility god, Lono, has been crucial to Sahlins' account of why the Cook episode unfolded the way it did. This view of Cook, Sahlins has argued, allowed Hawaiians to make cultural sense of Cook's arrival—and to steer the resulting drama so that it took a locally meaningful course.

When Obeyesekere, a Sri Lankan, heard



How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook, for Example
By Marshall Sahlins
University of Chicago Press
328 pp., \$24.95



Sahlins recount the story of Cook's apotheosis at a Princeton lecture, he was appalled. As he recently told *Lingua franca*, he identified "with the Hawaiians as a kind of outsider group" and felt "almost humiliated" by Sahlins' claim that "natives" took the white outsider for a deity. Thus outraged, Obeyesekere set out to show that the thesis of Cook's apotheosis was itself a Western myth, one that proved Hawaiian naivete and thus justified the imperialist mission for generations to follow. He made this argument, with Sahlins as his main contemporary opponent, in his 1992 book *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton). Obeyesekere advanced two lines of argument against Sahlins. He challenged on empirical grounds the notion that the Hawaiians took Cook to be Lono. And more broadly, he sought to shift the theoretical focus away from Hawaiian culture to the disintegration of Cook's character. In Obeyesekere's account, Cook gradually deteriorated into the kind of volatile individual that any practical-minded sort of person might want to kill, regardless of how they understood him in cultural terms.

How "Natives" Think is Sahlins' thorough, witty, sometimes caustic rejoinder to Obeyesekere's attack. While Sahlins' account of the Cook apotheosis may have seemed like an inviting foil for Obeyesekere, Sahlins himself is a formidable opponent. He is something of an anthropologists'

anthropologist, with a remarkable ability to move easily between a high order of theoretical sophistication and the raw material of ethnography without sacrificing the generality of the former or the complexity of the latter. Here he rehearses in close detail the ways in which, as his account has it, events conspired with the structure of Hawaiian culture so that the Hawaiians did indeed understand Cook as a manifestation of the god Lono returning for his fertilizing rule of the island during Makahiki, an annual dramatic ritual aimed at bringing about the rebirth of nature. They greeted him with the rituals used to welcome the god, and they watched him leave when Makahiki was coming to an end, thus allowing the King of Hawai'i to resume his rule in timely fashion. In Hawaiian terms, then, the broad outline of Cook's behavior conformed to ritual plan. Cook's blunder, Sahlins argues, was to return eight days after he left, to repair a sprung foremast. This untimely reappearance, Sahlins writes, put Cook "out of phase with the Hawaiian ritual cycle," made him "generally unintelligible" in terms of Hawaiian culture and thus a problem for the king and his chiefs. Ultimately, Sahlins adds, Cook's reemergence also led to his murder when he went ashore to take the Hawaiian king hostage until a cutter stolen from his ship was returned. The effect of Sahlins' careful, detailed retelling of the episode is to tilt the empirical debate distinctly in his favor.

Few readers, however, will be either looking—or prepared—to adjudicate this debate solely on the basis of the

empirical evidence. What makes this fight compelling to the wider public is the way it speaks to current theoretical-cum-political debates in the humanities and the social sciences. Obeyesekere argues that Sahlins errs by claiming that the Hawaiians made sense of Cook primarily in mythic and ritual terms. Instead, Obeyesekere interprets the Hawaiians' reception of Cook as determined by the islander's exercise of a pan-human "practical rationality," which led the king of Hawai'i to seek Cook as an ally in inter-island warfare.

The same rationality led the Hawaiians to resent Cook's return because Cook and his men were supposedly too great a drain on Hawaiian food supplies, and to kill him because he let his terrifying propensity for anger get the best of him in his search for the stolen cutter.

But if Sahlins works diligently to respond to Obeyesekere's various claims of empirical inadequacy, he seems positively inspired when the stakes turn theoretical. To come at Sahlins with a broad, universal concept like practical rationality is to throw a weak punch while leaving your chin uncovered: Sahlins has long devoted himself to showing how, in the face of complex cultural differences, the appeal to universal perceptual and cognitive powers appears so general that it is useless in accounting for specific instances of human action or historical change. Thus, the payoff punches come when Sahlins reviews the ways culture inescapably shapes human perception and thought—and when he therefore insists that we cannot do without theories of the ways in which different cultures organize experience differently.

Sahlins knows, however, that to prevail even on the higher plane of theory may not be enough. The sticky politics of emphasizing cultural difference are such that some might wonder whether Obeyesekere's brand of universalism should triumph purely on moral grounds. So Sahlins is at pains to point out that there is no guarantee that choosing to ignore cultural differences automatically puts one on the side of the angels. After all, a stress on the universal may not lead to respect as much as it will allow one to recreate and further naturalize one's own ideology in another cultural setting. Thus, for example, Sahlins is struck by the irony that in the name of the morally uplifting cause of giving voice to the Hawaiians, Obeyesekere replaces their voices with his own speculations about how what amounts to Western rationality must have led them to think.

And there is a further irony that Sahlins leaves unremarked: Obeyesekere's attempted rehabilitation of the

Hawaiians ends up making Cook very much the master of his own destiny. It is his own rage, his own descent into what Obeyesekere calls his "Kurtz persona," that ultimately gets Cook killed—not his entanglement in the complexities of Hawaiian perception and thought. The most fundamental piece of common sense that underlies Obeyesekere's interpretation, then, is the one that says we all make our own beds. This is certainly a more comforting

image for most Western readers than is Sahlins' portrait of a man caught in the snares of misunderstandings and of cultural structures that can work themselves out beyond the reach of individual human intentions.



In the end, the Cook controversy appears to land the quest for more sensitive cultural theory back in that murky region of unresolved contradictions in Western thought. Here, even when everyone has the best of intentions, the high road can be hard to find. Obeyesekere counsels a respect for universal human perceptual and cognitive capacities. Sahlins does not deny that such capacities exist, but he argues that it is ultimately the cultural differences

between people that make a difference in human history. In the sweeping moral terms that dominate so much of today's debate over the politics of theory, both Obeyesekere and Sahlins are supporting core Western values. It is, after all, a founding contradiction of post-enlightenment Western political culture that our liberal respect for differences is founded on notions of universal human abilities and rights. The trick, of course, is to figure out where assertions of universalism are helpful, and where they must give way to a clear-headed appreciation of human variety. The question at issue in this conflict, then, is whether in the matter of human thinking it is best to stress its universal basis or the particular cultures in which it is always caught up. Sahlins argues with great theoretical acumen for the latter. And theory aside, one cannot but wonder if, in a world where one group's failure to rectify a bad situation in Waco, Texas can be another group's portent of a fascist apocalypse, it might well be a rational, pragmatic move of the sort Obeyesekere favors to follow Sahlins in attending to the different ways *all* kinds of "natives" think. ◀

Joel Robbins is an anthropologist who specializes in Melanesian culture. He has published articles in the journals *Social Analysis* and *Ethnology*.

Mouse almighty

By Chris Rasmussen

Popular culture is far from popular in some circles these days. While right-wing politicians inveigh against sex and violence in rap lyrics and on movie screens, many academicians sneer at the triviality of "pop" culture and the growth of popular culture studies in the university. Those not content to restrict their understanding of the pleasures and pitfalls of popular culture to a sound bite or a learned sigh, however, would do well to accompany the Project on Disney, a gaggle of three English professors and a photographer, on its excursion through the nation's most famous and successful theme park. The project's four co-authors promise to take the reader "inside the mouse," exposing the complex dynamics of popular culture that too many politicians and professors willfully ignore.

Despite the phenomenal success of Disney World's forbear, Disneyland, which opened in Anaheim, California, in 1955, Walt Disney was dismayed by the unsightly motels and restaurants that popped up like toadstools in the shadow of his Magic Kingdom: They blighted the surroundings and captured tourist dollars that might otherwise have been his. Disney resolved to create the much larger Florida park ("forty-three square miles of fun," an area twice the size of Manhattan) and furnish it with its own hotels, restaurants and other amenities, so that he could better structure the visits of tourists and profit from them more completely.

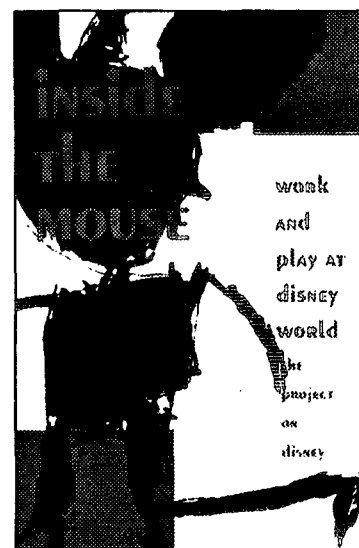
In a wide-ranging series of essays on the park's attractions, patrons, employees and architecture, the Project on Disney—let's call it POD—arrives at the dispiriting conclusion that Disney has, unfortunately, succeeded all too well. Disney World, the POD writers conclude, is "an all-encompassing environment of passive entertainment" that lulls all but the hardest visitors into an intellectual stupor—though *Inside the Mouse* struggles mightily to open up new possibilities for resistance among Disney patrons.

The co-authors describe the book as an "alternative

ride" through the park that notes significant gaps and breakdowns in Disney's all-powerful will to fun. Much of the "ride," however, covers terrain already familiar to those acquainted with recent work in cultural studies on fairs, amusement parks, shopping malls and other public and commercial spaces. For instance, the authors repeat long-familiar claims that Disney World, like most theme parks, simultaneously represents utopia and dystopia: a well-run community free from the problems that vex many American cities, but also a stultifying compound of planned leisure and corporate control. Similarly, they remind us that Disney's bizarre conception of time, which scrambles a sanitized version of American history wholly devoid of strife together with dazzling technological future as envisioned by the likes of General Motors, Exxon and AT&T, strategically keeps visitors off-balance. As Shelton Waldrep observes, Disney's disorienting mixture of nostalgia and futurism is calculated to baffle our critical faculties, creating "a planned opportunity to avoid thinking about the present."

POD's heady alternative ride does offer some novelties, however. Karen Klugman's photographs alone are worth the price of admission. Depicting what she terms "unposed forgettable moments," these images capture vacationers gobbling down overpriced burgers, waiting in interminable lines, perusing souvenir racks, struggling to keep their kids in tow. Collectively, Klugman's photos reveal a side of Disney World not likely to be found on its souvenir postcards and focus our attention on visitors' responses to Disney's artificial environment. As Jane Kuenz notes, "few people actually appear to be having a good time" at the park, and the subjects of many of Klugman's photos, caught during interludes between prepackaged amusements, look as though they are ready to head back to their hotel.

Swooping past the bedraggled families, the alternative ride plunges into the subterranean realm beneath Disney World, which houses the park's rarely glimpsed infrastructure, including its labyrinthine network of tunnels for trash



Inside the Mouse: Work and Play at Disney World
By The Project on Disney
(Karen Klugman, Jane Kuenz, Shelton Waldrep and Susan Willis), Duke University Press, 229 pp., \$19.95

removal and dressing rooms and other facilities for employees.

“Working at the rat,” as the Orlando locals call employment at Disney World, would scarcely inspire one to whistle a tune. Because the main product Disney sells is ultimately its own cheerful image, employees (“cast members”) are forced to “perform” their “parts” without even the slightest deviation from the company script. Incognito supervisors—who, like the visitors they impersonate, are called “shoppers” in official Disneyese—stroll the park in order to keep the performers on their toes, and those who dare to ad-lib are fired on the spot. Kuenz’s tales of employees keeling over from heat exhaustion in the Florida sun or barfing inside the grinning heads of their costumes or inadvertently losing those heads (and consequently their jobs) while on duty are enough to break the spell of the vaunted “Disney magic” for all but the most devout believer. Still, while Disney’s employees say they dislike the company (off the record, of course) and its unnecessarily strict rules, they profess to like their jobs. Working in the festive, theatrical atmosphere of the nation’s premier amusement park is, it seems, preferable to plugging away on an assembly line or in some nondescript office park.

After unmasking some of the employees’ “roles” POD turns once again to the park’s visitors. Obviously, the threat of dismissal is sufficient to compel obedience from the company’s workers; Disney resorts to subtler means to keep the throngs of visitors in line. But, as the authors of *Inside the Mouse* concede, most of the vacationers ambling about Disney World do not challenge the company’s effort to ensure that they have a pleasant, but hardly playful, experience. Instead of boarding their own “alternative rides,” most of the 13 million people who visit Disney World each year are apparently content, if not ecstatic, to line up for the ride that the company has designed for them. As Susan Willis observes, Disney’s effort to contain the carnivalesque has succeeded so well that “the consuming public largely polices itself.”

And that, indeed, may be the central limitation of enterprises such as *Inside the Mouse*. POD’s alternative ride suggests a creative, even hopeful, response to the regimented, homogenized ambience of Disney World. But weighing the



© 1995 TERRY LABAN

subversive potential of a few “unposed, forgettable moments” against the immense cultural authority of the Walt Disney company, I was forced to conclude that the imbalance between utopian promise and dystopian nightmare at Disney World is not about to be righted by a few jibes masquerading as political resistance. Like all rides, then, this one grinds to a halt exactly where it begins, and, while I enjoyed the thrills along the way, I realized that Disney World itself had scarcely been changed by the experience. While it’s undeniably useful to see the inner workings of America’s premier theme park, the Project on Disney is ominously silent on the question of how, if at all, we are ever to get outside the mouse. ◀

Chris Rasmussen is assistant professor of history at the University of Vermont.

CLASSIFIEDS

▷ HELP WANTED

THE PROGRESSIVE MAGAZINE seeks an associate editor. Must have strong editing skills and broad knowledge of the left. Salary: \$19,000. Available: August 1. Contact: The Progressive, 409 E. Main St., Madison, WI 53703.

SEARCH FOR COLLABORATOR-PARTNER. Books tentatively titled: *Cost of the (Unnecessary) Cold War—In Dollars, Lives and Democratic Institutions and Mass Murders of the 20th Century*. Write Aronson, 5820 Bikini Way So., St. Petersburg, FL 33706.

FOR HELP FINDING RADICAL EMPLOYMENT, send SASE to Pendulum Co-op, PO Box 24610, Baltimore, MD 21214.

JOIN INFACT'S LEADERSHIP TEAM! Seeking experienced: development director & communications/media director. INFACT's expanding its corporate accountability organizing in these times of increased corporate

dominance, Newtonian politics and the rise of the right wing. Contact: Kelle Louallier; INFACT; 256 Hanover; Boston, MA 02113; 617-742-4583/fax 367-0191. Target salaries: \$24,000-\$34,000, DOE, plus benefits. Resume deadline: July 21, 1995. Women, People of Color, Lesbians and Gays strongly encouraged to apply.

COMMUNITY JOBS: The Employment Newspaper for the Non-Profit Sector. Join over 50,000 job-seekers in reading a unique monthly publication containing more than 200 new job listings (in Environment, Arts, International, Health, Youth, Civil Rights, Housing, Human Services, etc.). Featuring informative articles,


book reviews, resource lists, profiles of nonprofit organizations and the people who found them. Contact: Community Jobs, 30 Irving Place Fl. 9, New York, NY 10003-2303.

IN THESE TIMES seeks **ADVERTISING MANAGER**- creative, responsible person to work in friendly, casual office. Background in advertising preferred but not essential. 20 hours per week, \$12,000 per year, plus health insurance. Fax resume to Claudia Morris at 312-772-4180 or send to 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Or call 312-772-0100, ext. 224.

ABORTION KILLS ...
ABORTION DOCTORS

Bumperstickers
Send \$1 Per Sticker To:
FLYSWATTER INC.
P.O. Box 8703, Madison, WI 53708-8703
(\$2 When You Mention "I.T.T." / Dealer Inquiries Welcome)
A portion of all proceeds donated to Pro-Choice causes.

THE REVOLUTION STARTS...



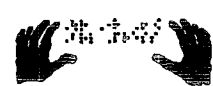
WHEN THE PUBS CLOSE!

Hvywt. T-shirt 100% cotton
6-color on natural: \$14.95
Available in M, L, XL and XXL
(XXL add \$1.50) \$3 shipping
Strip T's Designs
PO Box 605, Farmington,
NH, 03835
Phone/Fax (603) 755-2926
Check/money order/Visa/MC

DEFAUDING AMERICA

Detailed and documented description of corruption in CIA, Justice Dept., courts, & Congress. Written by gov't insider, aided by deep-cover CIA-DEA spooks. Dick Gregory: "Defauding America should be on top of every bible." 650 pgs. \$27.50 ppd. 1-800-247-7389.

Our Right To Know
Braille Press, Inc.



For blind and print-handicapped persons, **FI - FREEDOM IDEAS INTERNATIONAL**, a quarterly review of minority and independent publications, includes selected articles from **IN THESE TIMES**. Produced by Our Right to Know Braille Press, Inc., on 4-track 15/16 ips cassette tape. A 4-issue subscription costs \$5.

Our Right to Know
Braille Press, Inc.
640 Bayside, Detroit, MI 48217
(313) 842-1804

JEWISH CURRENTS
June, 1995 issue

"To Advance the Peace Process," editorial; "The Rosenbergs' Trial and Me," George O. Cureton; "Ghosts, War and Myth in Current Jewish Fiction," Roger B. Goodman; "We Didn't Know You Were Still Living," Edith Chevat.

Single issue: \$3 (USA).
Subscription: \$30 yearly (USA).

JEWISH CURRENTS
Dept. T, Suite 601
22 E. 17 St., New York, NY 10003

▷ PUBLICATIONS

WIN News- 80-page quarterly journal on women's rights worldwide. Free sample (\$1 for postage). Write: Women's International Network, 187 Grant St., Lexington, MA 02173.

MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH LIKE NEVER BEFORE! Stay healthier-happier! Professional humor secrets/tips. Free Information! **FUNNYBIZ-TT**, 9551 Riverview, Eden Prairie, MN 55347.

ANARCHIST COOKBOOK \$30. Uncensored edition! Underground book catalog \$2. FS Book Company, PO Box 417457, Dept. IN, Sacramento, CA 95841-7457.

▷ BOOKS

CAXTON BOOKSEARCH. Box 220, Ellison Bay, WI 54210. We'll order or search for any book. (800) 288-7724.

▷ CATALOGS

DO YOU HAVE SPANKING FANTASIES? We do—hundreds—and ours are for sale. Romantic, erotic, disciplinary, wherever the muse wanders. For a 24-page catalogue send \$3.00 to CF Publications, Box 706TT, E. Setauket, NY 11733.

Imperialism, Inner-Cities, Activism, Feminism, etc...
Free catalog:
Real Books
1518 W. Thorndale,
Chicago, IL 60660

Bad Subjects

Political Education for Everyday Life.
A FREE zine available **WORLDWIDE** on the Internet. *Bad Subjects* is an effort to revitalize American leftist politics by challenging its orthodoxies and focusing on the political dimensions of our everyday lives. Articles have covered Hong Kong action movies, malls, Rush Limbaugh, critiques of multiculturalism. U.S. Christian right politics, sexual preferences, contemporary Marxism and much, much more. Find us in gopherspace: uclink.berkeley.edu (port 52673).
Our Website: URL <http://english-server.hss.cmu.edu/BadSubjects.html>
email /snail mail : bad@uclink.berkeley.edu/322 Wheeler Hall,
UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720.
"Surprisingly lively and smart."
-SF Chronicle.

► FOREIGN LANGUAGES

SPANISH, CULTURE, TOURS, at ESCUELA AZTECA. Summer in beautiful Cuernavaca. \$220 two weeks. Intensive grammar all levels. Week-

CHIAPAS
CHALLENGING HISTORY
INDIGENOUS VIEWPOINTS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTHERN MEXICO
SPECIAL EDITION OF ARIZONA JOURNAL. SINGLE ISSUE: \$14.00 PPD. ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION: \$18.00 (U.S.)
CHECK/VISA/MC TO: 300-ITT CALDWELL HALL, CORNELL UNIVERSITY, ITHACA, NY 14853

HAITI
Travel to Haiti and learn firsthand about the current political and social situation. July 23 - 30 & Sept. 24 - Oct 1 Call for a free brochure. 800 - 497-1994 or Global Exchange 415 - 255-7296

Socialist
A democratic socialist view of life and politics from the Socialist Party USA.
\$9.00 per year (6 issues). 516 W. 25th St. #404, NY, NY 10001 (212) 691-0776

IN THESE TIMES Classified Ads Work Like Your Own Sales Force.

Word Rates:

95¢ per word / 1-2 issues
85¢ per word / 3-5 issues
80¢ per word / 6-9 issues
75¢ per word / 10-19 issues
65¢ per word / 20+ issues

Display Inch Rates:

\$30 per inch / 1-2 issues
\$28 per inch / 3-5 issues
\$26 per inch / 6-9 issues
\$24 per inch / 10-19 issues
\$22 per inch / 20+ issues

Classified ads must be prepaid. Send your copy, coupon, and payment to:

IN THESE TIMES, Classified Ads,
2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

Enclosed is my check for \$_____ for _____ week(s).

Please indicate desired heading _____

Advertiser _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

end tours. Minicourses with Ross Gandy, Ph.D. (Mexico: Reform or Revolution?). Live with Mexican family. For brochure: call (52-73)-15-24-69. Address: ESCUELA AZTECA, Apdo. Postal 76-005; 04201 Mexico, D.F.

CENTRO MAYA: women/indigenous owned co-op in beautiful Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. 5 hours weekday

Stand up for your constitutional right!
TRAVEL TO CUBA WITH THE FREEDOM TO TRAVEL CAMPAIGN
ECO FOCUS APRIL 7-14
PINAR DEL RIO AND HAVANA
\$1000 from Cancun
Call 415-558-9490

TRAVEL OPPORTUNITY
"The Future of the Left in Central America"
El Salvador & Nicaragua August 5-17, 1995
Also ask about trips to Chiapas, South Africa, Vietnam & more!
Center for Global Education
2211 Riverside Avenue., Box #ITT
Minneapolis, MN 55454 612/330-1159

RARE VIDEO
Discover FACETS VIDEO's astonishing collection of 20,000 foreign, classic American, silent, documentary, fine arts and children's videos and laser disks that you will simply not find anywhere else. Purchase or rent by mail. FACETS VIDEO, 1517 W. Fullerton, Chicago 60614
FREE SAMPLER CATALOG: 1-800-331-6197

individual Spanish instruction, complete R&B, \$120/week. Contact: 3314 Sherwood, Wichita Falls, TX 76308. (817) 696-3319. e-mail: centro-maya@aol.com.

► HEALTH

AIDS EPIDEMIC IN TAMPA, FLORIDA!
For free report: HPAF, PO Box 10088, Tampa, FL 33679.

Jewish progressivism is alive & well!
Bimonthly newsletter (22 issues) only \$35
Sample issue — \$3
The INTELLIGENT Guide to Jewish Affairs
Dept ITT
PO Box 48 • Mineola, NY 11501-0048

Concerned Singles Newsletter
links compatible singles who care about peace, social justice, gender equity, racism, and the environment.
Nationwide
All ages • Since 1984
FREE SAMPLE: Box 555-IT
Stockbridge MA 01262 or (800) 370-5040

SOME NEWS
Should Be Embroidered
Denim Blue
Orange, Black on White
50/50 Cotton Blend
Open Season Press
616 Grove City Rd.
Slippery Rock, PA 16057
\$14.00 + \$2.50 S/H
Visa / MC
1-800-484-7660
Ext. 4478
"The Newt"
T-Shirt
L, XL
A Front
Back ►

DISEASE TREATMENTS. Hospital tested, safe utilization of colored light. Free information packet. Dinshah Health Society, PO Box 707-I, Malaga, NJ 08328.

► PERSONALS

RUSSIA, W. EUROPE, SO. AMERICA, AUSTRALIA, etc.: Worldwide introductions. Sincere, professional men and women. Free info. Scanna Int'l. (since 1980), PO Box 4-ITT, Pittsford, NY 14534. 1-800-677-3170 (24 hr.).

OPEN RELATIONSHIPS, group marriage, intimate friendship. Interested? Discreetly contact others. SASE for details. Current issue \$4. Touchpoint, PO Box 408-TT2, Chloride, AZ 86431.

► MISCELLANEOUS

EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT!!! The DILDORAMA Poster. Twelve Hilarious Dioramas. Bohemian, Post-modern, Full-Color, Feminist. 18" x 24". Suitable for framing. Send \$13.95 to STET, PO Box 5366, Gainesville, FL 32602.

"MUTE NEWT"! Union-printed bumperstickers, \$2 each or 50/\$50, 100/\$70. SASE to Union Enterprises, Box 303, Ridge Farm, IL 61870.

GOOD VIBRATIONS
Friendly, Informative catalogs of sex toys, books & videos, \$4.
1210 Valencia #IT
San Francisco, CA 94110

This publication is available in microform.
University Microfilms
International reproduces this publication in microform: microfiche and 16mm or 35mm film. For information about this publication or any of the more than 13,000 titles we offer, complete and mail the coupon to: University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Call us toll-free for an immediate response: 800-521-3044. Or call collect in Michigan, Alaska and Hawaii: 313-761-4700.
University Microfilms International

Continued from page 40

working on a day-to-day basis to keep the online environment tuned, relevant and compelling." Delphi and Fox proved hugely successful in fine-tuning their first targeted market—the X-Files.

Even before the Fox takeover, Delphi—along with America Online and Prodigy—had started bulletin boards dedicated to the series. But when Delphi was gobbled up by Fox, the network moved to make its online service the "exclusive outlet" for official *X-Files* merchandise. What's more, customers of Delphi's *X-Files* forum got exclusive access to scripts and other inside dope from the show's producers. By last March, the forum was getting "a couple hundred postings a day," a Delphi spokeswoman reported.

The founder of the Delphi forum is a young molecular biologist and follower of things supernatural named Christopher Fusco. In an e-mail interview, Fusco said he established the forum to encourage discussion not just about *The X-Files*, but about a broad range of paranormal interests. However, Fusco hoped to attract more people to his bulletin board by calling it the "*The X-Files Forum*."

Fusco insists that his relationship with Fox is casual, if unusually close. Upon purchasing Delphi, Fox "moved [the forum] to a more highly visible area, picked up my bill and has given me contacts with people who bring us all this exclusive merchandise and files," Fusco noted. "They ... ask me for suggestions about what the fans want," and, significantly, "where to advertise." In other words, Fox used Fusco to set up shop, proving once and for all that the end destination of the information superhighway is the shopping mall.

Fox makes much of the online "contributions" to its show—which, conveniently, become property of the network once they are posted. Carter once claimed to read up to 70 pages of downloaded fan comments each night. And, in a recent online forum, co-executive producer Glen Morgan said certain shows had been tailored to the net fans. The feeling that they are being "listened to" leads to a kind of team spirit among fans that makes their designation as a "cult" more eerily appropriate.

The percentage of online script ideas that actually makes it on-air is undoubtedly small. But that doesn't make the contributions any less valuable for Fox. Due largely to the cultivation of its online audience, *The X-Files* this season has captured the highly prized 18-34 year-old audience—garnering the twelfth-largest share of that magic demographic.

When it comes to selling those sought-after viewers, it was David Lynch who first taught that quirky sells. The brief but astonishing success of Lynch's *Twin Peaks* provided the contemporary blueprint for what "cult hits" are supposed to be: darkly atmospheric and even more darkly ironic. Get that down, the logic goes, and you'll attract a preternaturally loyal viewership with disposable income to burn.

Fans of *The X-Files* have taken the bait: They positively jump at the chance to compare their show to the critically-

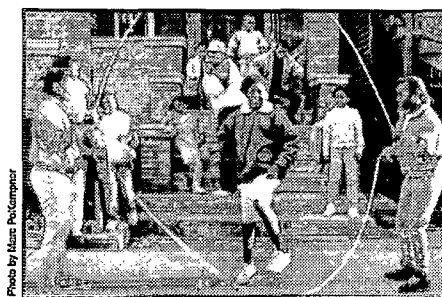
acclaimed Lynch series. It's true that *The X-Files* gets some good jokes off. The program is even more successful than *Twin Peaks* in capturing the creeping paranoia endemic in today's culture—some of the conspiracies hatched on the show must make Oliver Stone blush. Indeed, the show's claustrophobic worldview gives rise to characters whose control over appearances can be compared to only one earthly counterpart: the program's paterfamilias, Rupert Murdoch.

What does the future hold for this auspicious marriage of the information superhighway and the airwaves? I recently e-mailed Chris Fusco to learn about Fox's future plans for the show. He's online with Murdoch, one hundred percent. "We [*The X-Files Forum*] still get all the same things we used to [merchandise, advance stories], but now we are moving into more progressive areas such as videos and multimedia. We have some unbelievable things planned, but I can't comment on that yet. They tell me what we have here now is nothing. ... I hear what they have planned and all I can say is that it's unprecedented. I want to tell you more because I'm really excited about the new developments."

But Fusco doesn't tell me more—he "can't comment." Fusco's reluctance to talk about Fox's secret plans to saturate the Internet with tabloid hucksterism brings to mind the exhortation beamed in *The X-Files*' opening credits: "Trust No One."

Ana Marie Cox publishes *Noiseless*, where a version of this story first appeared. To reach *Noiseless* write: 196 Terry Rd., Hartford, CT 06105.

Social Investing Begins Where You Bank!



Join forces with the nation's leader! Your investment in any FDIC-insured South Shore Bank account rebuilds neighborhoods. • By phone, mail, cash card and direct deposit. As convenient as any bank around the corner. • Safety, yield—and the highest social return. Call today.

South Shore Bank

1 (800) 369-7725 • (312) 753-5636

Yes I'd like a South Shore Bank Development Deposits™ brochure and application.

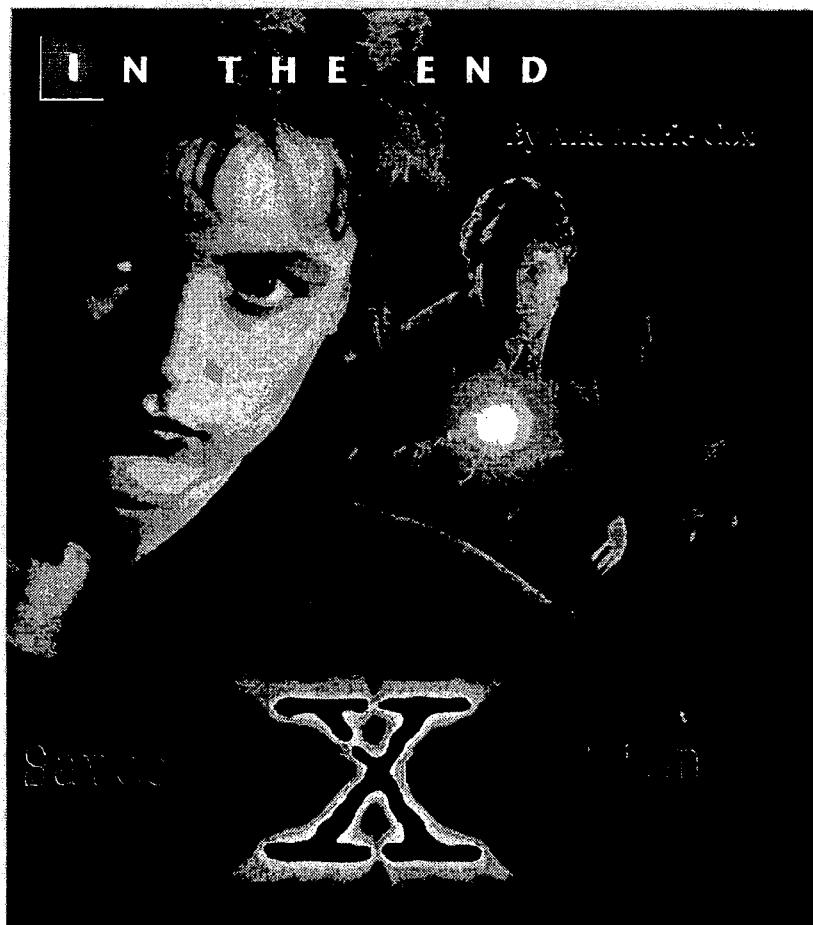
Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Mail to: South Shore Bank
71st & Joffrey Blvd., Chicago, IL 60649-2093 Member FDIC



When it debuted in the fall of 1993, Fox's *The X-Files* seemed destined to fail. It had a weak time slot—9 p.m. Friday—and a worse concept. Highlighting the show's unlikely premise—two FBI agents investigate the paranormal—*X-Files* creator Chris Carter described the show to one interviewer as *Silence of the Lambs* meets *Unsolved Mysteries*.

But until this season there was a major problem with that comparison: People actually watched *Lambs* and *Mysteries*, while the *The X-Files* finished 111th out of 128 programs in the 1993-94 Nielsen ratings. Despite those dismal numbers, Fox signed on for at least one more season—insisting that the series was developing a “cult following” in the twentysomething demographic niche so highly prized by advertisers.

The success of *The X-Files* this season has apparently proven Fox prescient: the series pulled up to 69th out of 117 shows in the 1994-95 Niensens and won a Golden Globe this winter. However, the purported cult following that inspired the show's renewal has origins as murky as those of *The X-Files*' villains. To resuscitate its dying program, Fox masterfully exploited the components of its multimedia empire. They used, as a tool, the almost pathetic exuberance that young, educated urban audiences have shown for any program that is a cut above your everyday drivel. Odd as it may seem, Rupert Murdoch's Fox Television and Delphi Internet Services—another Murdoch company—have recruited the

program's most devoted and computer-literate fans into a kind of intellectual work farm. And Fox's manipulation of the *The X-Files*' loyal following has been concealed as artfully as any of the show's ubiquitous UFO cover-ups.

The X-Files premiered in September 1993, and a scan of the mainstream coverage of the show reveals that its “following” was suspiciously quick to emerge. Just two months after the show hit the airwaves, the *Los Angeles Times* broke the story of its supposed cult status; in December, pop culture bellwether *Entertainment Weekly* reported that fans of the show were calling themselves “X-Philes.” “They see the smallest things,” Carter gushed to an interviewer. By April even the *New Yorker* was respectfully noting that the *The X-Files* was “building a cult audience” and had “the makings of a classic.”

But were the X-Philes fact or fiction? The press hype about the program's fanatical audience peaked, conveniently, just before the May 1994 ratings “sweeps.” Which is not to say that any money changed hands between unscrupulous Fox publicity agents and slimy television critics. No, the kind of corruption that Murdoch's various subsidiaries engineered was far more subtle.

If you have an opinion, chances are Rupert Murdoch had some influence in shaping it. Though his bid to purchase House Speaker Newt Gingrich appears to have failed, Murdoch's media web does include HarperCollins Books (which is still Gingrich's publisher), Fox Broadcasting Company and Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp. He also owns *TV Guide* and a substantial interest in 23 other magazines in North America, Europe and Australia. He owns the *New York Post* and, quite possibly, a share in your hometown paper, too—he partially controls 130 around the world. He has holdings as well in Star TV, a satellite broadcaster that reaches as many as 200 million Asian and European viewers—a fact that explains, finally, how *Baywatch* became the world's most watched television program.

In the fall of 1993, Murdoch bought Delphi Internet Services, an access road to the information superhighway that until quite recently was known only for its complete lack of a graphic interface. When Murdoch bought Delphi, its share of the online market was hovering somewhere below 100,000 subscribers—compared to the 5 million subscribers to Prodigy, CompuServe and America Online combined. Delphi officials were understandably elated by the opportunities that Fox's takeover offered.

Immediately after the purchase, a Delphi publicist explained that “a winning strategy for Delphi is to go after targeted markets with tailored offerings, where we will be

Continued on page 39